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AMERICAN  
RED CROSS WORK  
AMONG THE  
FRENCH PEOPLE  
FISHER AMES, JR.



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**AMERICAN RED CROSS WORK  
AMONG THE FRENCH PEOPLE**

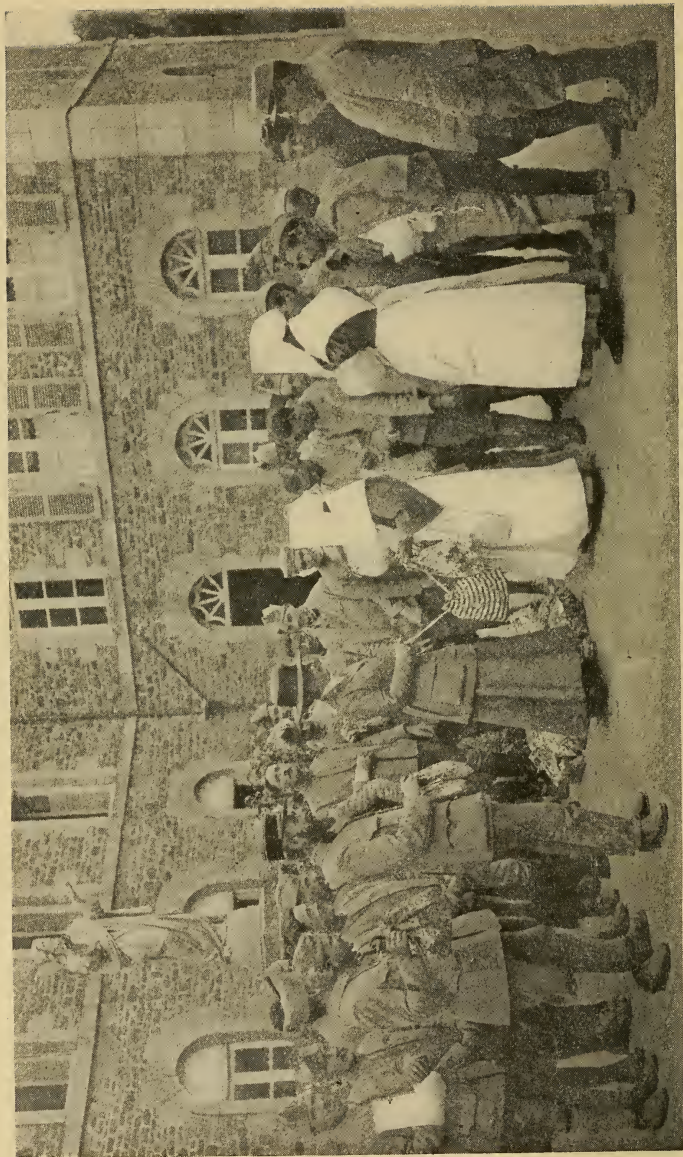


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#### COMFORT BAGS FOR EVERYBODY

Those bright colored bags filled by the hands of American women with the little luxuries and necessities that men in hospitals so much appreciated, reached many French soldiers as well as Americans. This is a distribution at a French hospital.

# AMERICAN RED CROSS WORK AMONG THE FRENCH PEOPLE

BY  
FISHER AMES, JR.

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## PREFACE

As it would be impossible to give in narrative form a full account of the activities of the American Red Cross among the French during the World War and keep it within the limits of a single volume, and as much of the work was purely technical, it has been thought best to deal with its various aspects in a general fashion rather than specialize on any. It is hoped thereby to inform the reader in an interesting way of the broad character and scope of American Red Cross efforts.

It will be noticed that the book deals with work during the war period and the months immediately following and does not attempt to take up post-war activities in detail.

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August, 1921.





## INTRODUCTION

From the inception of the war partisanship for France was palpable in the United States. One heard and read recurring allusions to the vital aid she had rendered us during our War of the Revolution and the debt owed her by the world because of her consistent and heroic efforts to secure the rights of the individual.

France had been the crucible where all the great social and political questions of Europe had first been tried out. She was ever one of the leaders in the onward march of civilization. In art, science, and literature she had held aloft the standard and throughout her history her courage and gallantry had burned like those inextinguishable lamps on the altars of the ancients. The wonder of the Crusades, that still glows for us like a lonely jewel in the dark setting of the Middle Ages, is due mainly to her and she it was who first emerged from the gloom of those stagnant years and gave to Europe the initial example of a new and definite social organization. It was on her soil that the people, as distinguished from the aristocracy, first united in the Third Estate whose voice, sounding always the slogan of justice for the masses, was heard and heeded in other countries. From her Revolution came those ideas that are today the basis of her public and private laws; ideas which "the Republic and the Empire, by their victories, disseminated in every part of Europe and which are destined to spread over the whole world because they are summed up in the one word justice."

The fact that Germany already had the wanton victory of 1870 to her discredit intensified the sympathy felt among the masses of America for France, and to the student of his-

tory it was known that instead of a grudge, she owed to France a special debt. It was the social principles brought into life by the French Revolution that finally raised the body of the German people out of their wretched and ill-formed state. Even Treitschke was compelled to admit that, "the Constitutional ideas of the Revolution struck root in German soil, and without the Revolution the famous Article 13 of the Act creating the German Federation would never have seen the light."

Thus for one reason or another there was a measurable amount of sentiment for France in the United States. War had hardly begun before twenty cases of bandages, addressed to the "French Army, Havre," reached that port. They were the first of a steadily increasing stream of gifts directed across the Atlantic by individuals, societies, communities and eventually by the united people. Notwithstanding their reputation for practicality no people, if any, have greater capabilities for compassion and open-handedness than those of the United States, but they wish to be sure of their facts before they give freely. Their generosity to France at this time was the more noteworthy in that the United States as a whole had not taken sides, but stood apart in what was apparently a fixed attitude of neutrality.

A number of societies for relief work with outlets in France were formed in the States and many volunteers crossed the Atlantic to fight or work by her side. Gifts continued to flow into her ports, but a large proportion were neither properly addressed nor classified. As a result many went astray and thousands of crates and bales collected in neglected heaps at the French docks where no officials had been specially appointed to receive, examine, and distribute them. France, laboring in the grip of war, had little time to think of them. Handicapped by a shortage of labor, material, and inadequate means of transportation, she was making the effort of her life to meet the inexorable demands of her fighting forces.

It was impossible, even if it had fallen within its province, for our busy Embassy to undertake the task of regulating and distributing the gifts from America, but something had to be done and under the initiative of Ambassador Myron T. Herrick, an organization called the American Relief Clearing House was formed at Paris, "to bring order out of a tangle of good intent." This was the first seed of organized American relief work on French soil and the French immediately perceived in it that energy of growth so typical of American affairs. Nor was it long before they realized that the generous motives animating it were equally characteristic of our national spirit.

The task confronting the Clearing House, though relatively much simpler, had many aspects in common with the greater work later undertaken by the people of the United States through their official agent, the Red Cross. Its list of patrons was imposing, but actually it was always short of working personnel — the majority of whom were volunteers serving without pay — and its own transportation facilities were exceedingly meager for an organization which was in the main an agency for forwarding relief supplies from America to their various destinations in France. By keeping closely in touch with the French authorities it was able to inform its New York branch, and other war relief societies at home, as to the quantity and kind of supplies most needed. It also visited the wounded in the hospitals and aided destitute refugees. These are but samples of its activities. In spite of never-ending difficulties it steadily enlarged its field of usefulness until it had built up a schedule of operation that touched almost every phase of war relief. Its well-earned reputation for benevolence and efficiency rests upon the fine pluck and perseverance of a handful of men.

The work of the Clearing House deserves a more extended mention than can be given here. When the Red Cross came it turned over to that organization its franchise for crossing the ocean, granted it by the French Govern-

ment; all its supplies and personnel, and its assets; and there was not one debt. The leader of the Red Cross Commission said of this action: "The Red Cross could never have accomplished what it did — in the time it did — without this aid." If France had reason for being grateful to the American members of the Clearing House, and she has often expressed her gratitude, it is equally certain that our country has a right to feel proud of them.

Germany's failure to see others as they really were was, perhaps, particularly gross, but she was not the only country that studied the rest of the world through its own spectacles. Prior to the war few of us perfectly understood the workings of the Teuton mind, and it might be added that the United States has been the object of an almost universal misconception, some foreigners regarding us as a shrewd, eccentric, and crude people, finance mad, hard as nails and quite lacking in any cohesion or national consciousness, while others looked upon us less seriously as the land of the ready revolver, the bucking bronco, and the sinister millionaire with the romantic daughter. Europe commonly believed that we steered a carefully neutral course through those first years of war because such a course meant money in our pockets. On the other hand we were guilty of equally grave mistakes in our estimates of the peoples of the Old World.

The attitude of the United States at the beginning of hostilities was not the result of deliberate choice. It was the most sacred of our few political legacies. There is nothing to be gained by a detailed discussion of the subject here, but our geographical isolation from the Old World and our mental aloofness from its politics had made of us a self-centered people. The governments of Europe had been content to leave us out of their round-table conferences. To the great majority of the citizens of the United States the world politics of Europe represented something undesirable and oppressive from whose influence they or their

ancestors had had the energy happily to escape. The roots of most European "questions" or alliances seemed to be sunk in the selfish, reactionary, or sinister aims of the various governments, aims which had little to do with the will of the governed whose welfare appeared to be considered only incidentally, if at all.

Such, at least, was the opinion of the average citizen of the United States who saw in the breaking out of the war merely another and bolder move than usual in that intricate political game round which the diplomats of the Old World had always warily sat. Our first instinctive feeling was one of repulsion and indignation at the brutal climax. We were too far away, too alien to the situation, to see the real factors hidden under the net-work of intrigue. It was only when the German government had completely torn off her mask that we could trust ourselves to sit in the seat of judgment.

Complex though the physical mass of our population is, it is united in its love of liberty and its self-confidence. A race of men who have boldly broken away from their original environments to hue out a new life in a remote land, either from ambition, from devotion to abstract principles, or a desire for adventure cannot be otherwise than self-confident. Fear of what Germany might do to us after she had conquered Europe had little weight in our decision. It is not easy to inject the virus of fear into such a nation as the United States. On the other hand it is a nation readily receptive to sentiment.

None of the other world powers were conscious of the apparently paradoxical fact that sentiment and idealism can flourish in a land where practicality and business efficiency are supposed to be the great gods of mundane affairs. But when President Wilson on April 6, 1917, declared a state of war against Germany, the United States, as one man, received the call to arms in a spirit of exaltation somewhat analogous to that which animated the contenders in the religious wars of the past. There was no



thought of material gain, no national pride to flaunt, or injury to avenge. The country declared itself ready to give even to its last man and its last dollar, because it believed that the might of Germany threatened the existence of those abstract principles in which America has put its abiding faith.

When General Joffre visited the United States in the spring of 1917, he said: "Give us credit for food and shells and our army can hold out forever; give us something to show the French people that America is really with us, something they can see and understand, and they will back up our army to Berlin and beyond." It was an acknowledgment that the morale of the civil population was as important a factor in the war as the valor of the men at the front. The struggle was too tremendous for its issue to depend merely upon a matter of rations and ammunition and fighting men.

President Wilson, setting in motion all the immense economical, financial, and moral machinery of the country, began the raising of that army whose vigorous growth, enthusiasm, and marvelously rapid, effective trans-shipment will always be considered one of the most vital and extraordinary factors of the great war. The mass of German citizens undoubtedly knew little or nothing of these preparations, but their Government, through its drag-net system of espionage, must have realized it was beholding the metamorphosis of that possibility so disdainfully dismissed by Admiral Von Tirpitz as a mere "phantom," into an actuality of the most formidable proportions. With characteristic cunning they caused their agents to spread abroad an insidious fog of peace propaganda while at the same time they hastened their plans for the crushing of the Entente before the weight of American interference could overwhelmingly manifest itself upon the actual field of war.

There was good cause to fear that they might succeed

in doing this. Russia, disorganized, tottering to its chaotic fall, was out of the conflict; the wreck of Belgium was under the heel of the enemy and crippled France had lost her richest industrial regions while hundreds of thousands of her fighting men — the flower of her army — lay in their bloody graves, and hundreds of thousands of her women, children, and old men were destitute and homeless, exposed to the ravages of those diseases apt to follow in the wake of war. Great Britain, fearfully depleted in man power, money, and shipping, had already strained her sinews almost to the cracking point. Serbia and Roumania had been struck to the ground and despoiled, their peoples little better than the serfs of their conquerors.

It was for these grim reasons that General Joffre had said to the United States: "Give us something to show the French people that America is really with us, something they can see and understand." Something other than an official pledge — assurance enough between governments — was necessary in this crisis. The artisan in the factory, the wife and mother trembling in her home, the old peasant toiling in his threatened fields, the soldier interposing his body as a bulwark against the thrusts of the enemy, these were in need of more tangible aid than any promise however solemn. Their need was pressing. They could not wait for the full materialization of our military plans.

Though we had not perceived it at the time the principles for which we were eager to fight in 1917 had been at stake in 1914. The knowledge of this wrought in the United States an almost passionate appreciation of what our new Allies had done and endured, and a determination to make every effort possible and every sacrifice necessary to compensate for our late entry into the war. The feverish desire to co-operate immediately and to the full extent of our power led to some mistakes, but they were trifles compared to the great results achieved. Government and people united in practical examples of generosity.

Our citizens voluntarily denied themselves wheat, meat, and other forms of food that our Allies might be better fed. In the face of impending heavy war taxes and the swiftly rising cost of living the people still had money to give outright for the relief of the war sufferers abroad. In the brief space of seven days they contributed the sum of one hundred million dollars to the Red Cross that it might begin at once its work of mercy in France. Before its activities in that country were closed the organization received from the citizens of the United States subscriptions and voluntary contributions amounting in all to more than four hundred million dollars.



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# AMERICAN RED CROSS WORK AMONG THE FRENCH PEOPLE

## CHAPTER I

### IN PARIS

NO one had wanted war, but a great many had foreseen that it was bound to come sooner or later, and the nation as a whole had accepted it in a spirit of resignation and quiet determination, believing that it was ready for the issue. The mobilization of the troops had been a marvelously smooth and rapid performance. The people had confidence in their army and in themselves. They were not informed as to their own state of unpreparedness or the completeness and power of Germany's organization, and at the first drive of the enemy into France the life of Paris was for the moment seized with a kind of paralysis.

Following this period of bewilderment there ensued a time of wild though superficial confusion. A great number of people began to hasten from the city towards havens of safety. Many of the selfish rich left; the timid and the downright cowardly swelled the rush. The majority of the foreigners who idled about Paris were among the first to go. Certain trades and professions, seeing their custom and customers vanish, began to close their doors, and of their employees some were obliged to find work elsewhere or starve.

Not all of these hegiras took place at the first alarm. Each succeeding one was marked by an outgoing wave;

but Paris was stripped to its real self comparatively early in the war. All its surface glitter and gayety disappeared as one casts off a tinselled domino. By day the city was calm and quietly busy though its more fashionable streets were almost empty, and at night it had the soundless blackness of a tomb. Those of its citizens who did not wear mourning dressed in the most sober of colors. But flower stalls and barrows had never been more plentiful or glowing: there were so many graves to decorate.

The Paris that was left was splendid in its sacrifices and its charities. The number of its relief works mounted into the thousands and apparently overlooked no need; they were supplemented by others organized by foreigners which had their place and value and deserve special mention not only for the good they accomplished, but because their capital and personnel were generous testimonials to their affection for the French.

"It is curious," said a French writer, "that with their uniformity of purpose, of rule and, in general, of installation, they preserve their national characteristics to the point that, in those hospitals destined for the French, established upon the soil of France and in French buildings, one breathes an entirely foreign atmosphere. The visits to them are doubly interesting. One realizes his debt of gratitude to our wounded, and at the same time accomplishes something like an excursion into distant regions."

He had in mind the hospitals organized by the American colony of Paris, the Scotch Suffragists, and the Red Cross of Tokio. The first, which was at Neuilly, was afterwards taken over by our army and the American Red Cross as Hospital No. 1. No other hospital in the city was, in the opinion of the French visitors, so lavishly provided for, and they professed to see in its scientific perfection and its refinements of modern comfort something representative of the United States. Nothing was lacking that money could buy and that which could not be bought — the sympathetic devotion to duty of its personnel and

the skill of its eminent surgeons and specialists — was given gratuitously.

The hospital of the Scotch Suffragists was in the old gray abbey of Royaumont, a few miles outside of Paris. Here only the severely wounded were received, but except for a short period at the outset, when a French doctor assisted at some operations, no men were employed in the institution. True to their opinions, the suffragists maintained an entirely feminine personnel. From surgeons to stretcher-bearers all were women, and when the French physician gallantly retired it was with the full conviction that the affairs of the hospital were in capable hands. These charitable suffragists, in proving that, given the same training, a woman can do what a man can, furnished an example decidedly useful to the advancement of their cause.

Only wounded without family or friends were sent to the hospital of the Red Cross of Tokio on the Champs-Élysées. The young Japanese nurses came of good families and were highly trained and scrupulously attentive to the wants of their patients, and the gentleness and skill of its physicians was what one might have expected in view of the splendid reputation of Japan's medical profession. The hospital was a peculiarly quiet and restful place. With its soft-footed, smiling personnel, its calmness and its effect of immaculate simplicity, which an occasional single flower in a glass vase or a spray of cherry blossoms served only to emphasize, it was full of the soothing atmosphere of the Orient.

There were English, Canadian, and Australian formations and foreign charitable committees, almost without number. Nearly all of the neutral nations made contributions in one way or another to some form of relief work and scores of private individuals, particularly Americans who knew and loved Paris well, gave with unabated generosity. The Rockefeller Foundation should have a prominent place in the list of benevolent foreign organizations, the greatest

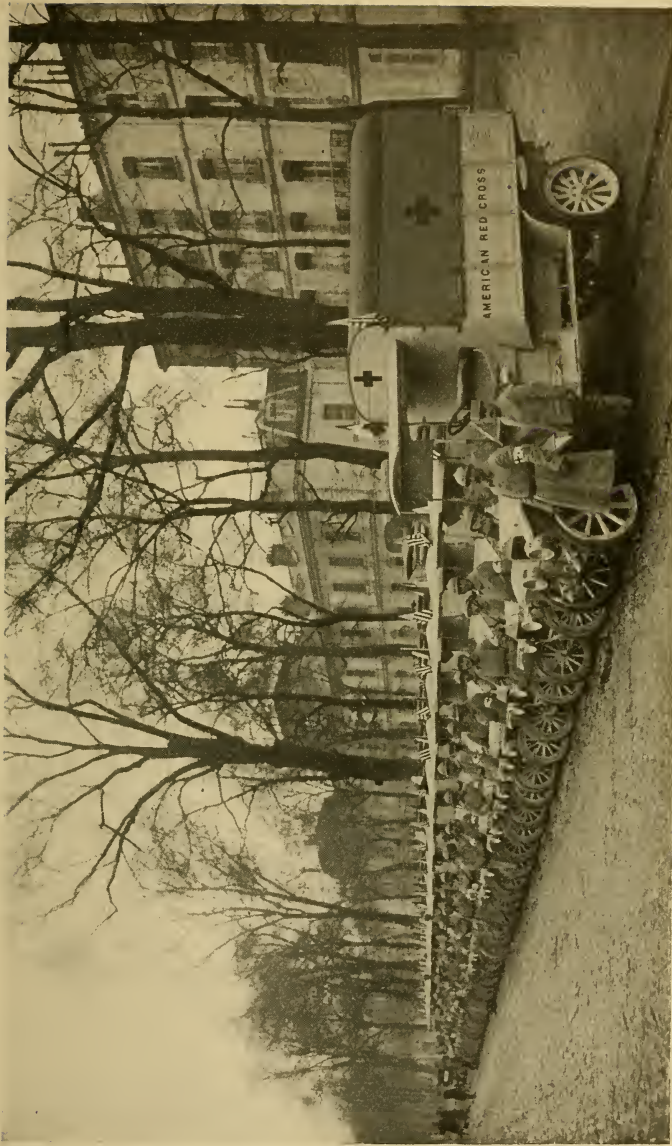
of which, before the arrival of the American Red Cross, was undoubtedly the American Relief Clearing House and its allies, whose wide-spread activities have already been mentioned. Russian and Italian hospitals also opened their doors to the French wounded.

Throughout the world women, rich and poor, joined together in voluntary aid societies with distributing bureaus in Paris to which they sent bandages and garments for the soldiers and the destitute. What finer, more touching thought than this: the desire of these women of distant nations to help alleviate by the work of their own hands the suffering caused by the war.

The measure of charity given by Paris itself was a full one. First and foremost were the activities of the *Croix-Rouge Française* with its three united societies. Of the four hundred and eighteen hospitals in the city and its vicinity the *Croix-Rouge* maintained two hundred and eighty-six. It operated besides a long chain of annexes such as railway canteens, *postes de secours*, auto-ambulance units, schools for mutilés, places of shelter for refugees and prisoners, and *cercles à foyers du soldat*. By its able management of these many-fold forms of service it proved itself an organization with few equals.

No list of the relief societies of the capital would be complete without the name of the *Croix-Verte* which from the most humble of beginnings grew to be a great power for the dissemination of war charity. Unlike the *Croix-Rouge* it was non-existent before 1914, and was born by chance in the Montparnasse railway station where soon after the commencement of hostilities a French couple and their friend observed a detachment of troops waiting for the train that was to carry them to the front. There was no buffet where the hungry men could refresh themselves and no comfortable place in which they could rest. The idea of providing for these simple needs occurred to the three spectators and was immediately acted upon. Permission was secured to install a little kitchen at which





#### FIRST AID

Early in 1919, even before the Red Cross was officially established in France, its fore-runner, The American Relief Clearing House, presented a fleet of ambulances on behalf of the A. R. C. to the French Army.



the two women prepared and served tea and coffee to the soldiers, and thus the work of *l'Acceuil*, the first of the activities of the *Croix-Verte*, was created.

Starting with a personnel of three this infant society developed a membership of many thousands. Gradually it increased the number of its kitchens which were soon preparing a full meal for the troops. In the meantime it launched its second enterprise, *L'Acceuil aux Réfugiés*, which fed the convoys of fugitives pouring into the city. Its most important service was the founding of a vestiaire where clothes were provided for refugees and wounded who were returning to civil life. It was one of the first of the relief associations to concern itself with the future of the reformés and its policy of giving work instead of alms to the mutilated soldier received the approbation of all France. It inaugurated also a system of visits to the hospitals by which divers forms of aid were given patients, particularly of the poorer classes. The American Relief Clearing House contributed generously to this department by gifts of underwear which were in much demand and difficult to obtain.

While the city was busy with its manifold works for the relief of wounded soldiers and the unfortunates of the invaded areas it had its own sharp taste of war. The Germans believed that if they could break the spirit of Paris the courage of the nation would rapidly ebb and with this end in view they perpetrated an intermittent series of attacks upon the capital by Taubes, Zeppelins, Gothas and those extraordinary long-range guns which the French nicknamed Great Berthas.

The first air-raid took place on August 30, 1914, about seven o'clock in the morning. Five bombs were dropped from the sky upon the astonished city, but small damage was accomplished save for a gas explosion on the rue de Vinaigriers. Seven air-raids followed, a total of forty-one bombs being dropped. The last occurred on October 12. On the 11th and 12th of May, 1915, the Germans made two

more Taube attacks that marked the end of the first series. The "five o'clock Taubes," as they were called by the Parisians because of the time at which they commonly appeared, ceased to appear after this date.

The bombs dropped by these machines were of four types, explosive, shrapnel, or incendiary, and in most cases did not weigh over four kilogrammes. That the object of the enemy was rather to intimidate than destroy was apparent from the fact that many of the pilots dropped only harmless darts carrying messages that foretold the early entry into Paris of the German army. Eleven persons were killed and fifty wounded.

On March 21, 1915, and January 29 and 30, 1916, German Zeppelins, which had already made many raids in England, visited Paris with more formidable projectiles, but fortunately their aim was poor and the twenty-four explosive and incendiary bombs launched from these machines killed only twenty-six persons and wounded twenty-eight. Only one fire was started, on the rue des Dames, and this was extinguished with two buckets of water.

The last Zeppelin raid marked the beginning of a cessation of the air attacks that lasted for almost two years. At any moment during that period the Parisians expected to be awakened by the droning of the Gothas, against whose coming the military authorities had made preparations. At last, on January 30, 1918, the "birds of prey" made their appearance and in spite of the fact that the city had been warned it was full of lights and furnished an excellent target for the aerial raiders. "The night was magnificently clear; the fire of the barrage was feeble, the defense having placed too much reliance upon the aeroplanes of Bourget whose impotence began to be demonstrated on this evening." It was a terrible assault. Ninety-one large projectiles were dropped in the city itself and one hundred and seventy-eight in the outskirts. A

large number of people were killed and wounded and great damage done to property.

Other Gotha attacks followed, the last being on the night of September 14, 1918. The missiles used were almost exclusively of the bomb-torpedo type, like a huge cigar, some of them weighing as much as three hundred kilos. Wherever they landed they tore the stoutest stone buildings to fragments and wrecked the neighborhood completely.

Before the Gotha raids ceased the shells from the Great Berthas had begun to fall in the city. The first landed upon the Quai de Seine on March 23, 1918, a little after seven o'clock in the morning. Eighteen shells, following each other at fifteen minute intervals, struck within the confines of Paris on that day. A gradually decreasing fire was kept up during the next few days and on March 29 only one shell came, but by a fatal combination of circumstances that day was Good Friday, and the solitary projectile struck the church of St. Gervais which was crowded with worshipers. More than one hundred of the congregation were killed or wounded, the majority of the victims being children and women. From that date the firing grew more intermittent until it ceased on April 27, when the Great Berthas installed near Laon were put out of service.

A month later a fresh flight of shells began to fall. The shelling lasted for about fifteen days after which there was a lull for more than a month. The firing was resumed on July 15, and on August 9, at a quarter to two in the afternoon the last missile reached Paris. A few minutes later two struck outside of the fortifications. The chapter of the Great Berthas was then closed.

The projectiles from the long-distance cannon caused relatively little material damage compared with the number of their victims which reached a total of eight hundred and seventy-six killed or wounded. Though the figures were only slightly in excess of the list of casual-



ties from the bombs of the German aircraft, long-distance bombardment was the more trying to the nerves of the citizens. The attacks of the avions and Zeppelins were briefer and their approach was heralded by blasts from the sirens and the reports of the anti-aircraft guns, while the shells from the Great Berthas fell without warning and during the hours when the life of the city was in full swing. Indirectly, however, the air-raids were responsible for a much greater loss of life for the habit, common in every quarter of the city, of passing the night in damp cellars and abris raised the mortality from bronchitis and pneumonia almost one hundred per cent.

As the war went on charitable Paris found the demands upon it increase while at the same time its funds were diminishing. At first it had been the soldiers and the refugees that had needed aid. There was no diminution of its activities in these directions but rather a greater effort to meet the still more urgent call, and then a new class, the widows and orphans, began to appear in such numbers as seriously to draw the attention of the city to them. The necessary work of relief was seen to be too much for any one society to handle and through the energy of various associations the coöperation of the public was secured, and a *Comité d'Entente* formed to coördinate all efforts. Ten charitable societies allied themselves for the common purpose of helping this new class of war sufferers and from its members was formed a central office to assure the functioning of the Comité. Other associations acting independently contributed to the support of these poor women and children. In the United States one hundred and fifty thousand children pledged themselves to send thirty-six dollars a year for two years to every one of one hundred and fifty thousand orphans whose fathers had died on the field of battle, and later on the strong American Society for the Relief of French War Orphans was formed under distinguished patronage.

The losses, human and material, were cumulative. Pov-

erty and sickness spread with increasing rapidity among the civilian population. Tuberculosis, already too prevalent in France, gained headway and infant mortality assumed alarming proportions. New phases were constantly arising which Paris with inexhaustible sympathy endeavored to meet. Every additional month of war brought its problems that pressed for immediate solution while the nation saw itself faced in the future by the gigantic task of restoring wrecked industries and rebuilding its hundreds of demolished towns. Her courage might well have broken under the weight of her burdens, but to her lasting glory the spirit of France remained high and unfaltering to the end.

## CHAPTER II

### BEGINNINGS AND OUTLINES

**T**WO months after the United States made its declaration of war against Germany the Red Cross Commission, composed of eighteen men, was on its way across the Atlantic. It reached France on June 13, 1917, the same date which saw the landing of General Pershing. Its arrival had not the same power to fire the popular imagination as the presence of the commander-in-chief, who was the physical symbol of our military coöperation. The broad character of the work which the American Red Cross had come to perform was not at the outset realized by the French, who took it for granted that the organization was merely supplementary to the medical department of our coming expeditionary forces.

Such was in truth the duty of the American Red Cross; but though it was its first, it was not its sole duty. It had a second which was to serve the sick and wounded of the Allied Armies. It had assumed also a third obligation, to give as much assistance as it could to the civil sufferers of the war. It is because of this self-imposed third duty, so little comprehended at first, that the work of the American Red Cross in France will remain forever an imperishable monument to the high ideals of the people of the United States.

The members of the Red Cross Commission were specialists, men picked for their broad knowledge of the lines of endeavor along which their campaign was to be directed. They were experts on banking, on welfare work, and building; on transportation and organization. They had not come merely to investigate and report to the War Council



at home, but with the intention and, thanks to the generous size of their budget, the power to operate at once.

Their first act was to get in touch with the French authorities and relief societies and through them to ascertain what the organization could do to carry out the mission entrusted to it by the American people in the speediest and most effective manner. In addition to the relief work it hoped to accomplish among the French, the Red Cross had to prepare plans for hospital and canteen formations against the time when the American Army should be in force upon the soil of France. It therefore naturally divided itself at once into the three main departments of Military Affairs, Civil Affairs, and Administration, each of which was sub-divided into a number of bureaus to facilitate the handling of various phases of the different activities.

In adapting itself to the shifting conditions in France the organization of the American Red Cross went through a number of changes from first to last. Bureaus were abandoned as the need of their services ceased and others were merged for the sake of efficiency or transferred from one department to another. In general, however, though several new departments were ultimately added, the three formed at the outset continued to the end to be the central seats of the main activities. The work of the Military Department, except that part which had to do with French military affairs, and the relief work especially concerned with the situation in Belgium, are fully described in other volumes, the present one dealing only with the aid given directly to the French people.

The work that lay in front of the Commission could not be fully visualized even with the counsel of the French authorities. It had to be approached more or less tentatively, the first steps being to ascertain the greatest needs and how the organized aid sent by the American people could be applied to meet them.

After three years of the bloodiest warfare of history the

combined power of France and England had proved unequal to the task of driving Germany back to her boundaries. A huge stretch of the richest portion of France was devastated or still in the hands of the enemy who at any moment threatened to sweep down upon and capture the capital itself. The ultimate victory still hung in the balance. Not only had France to put her all into the scale to save herself from a military defeat, but behind the lines she was confronted by conditions that seriously affected her welfare. Several millions of refugees from the War Zone were in urgent need of proper housing, of food, clothing and medical care. Tuberculosis was spreading rapidly among the people, and thousands of children, deprived of suitable nourishing food, were drifting toward a state of ill health from which many could not hope to recover.

This in brief was the situation. As a result of suggestions from the French government and its own investigations the American Red Cross decided to assist France in meeting the problems concerned with: First—The refugees and other displaced populations outside of the War Zone. Second—The devastated area and the War Zone. Third—The reëducation of the mutilés, or disabled soldiers. Fourth—The care and prevention of tuberculosis. Fifth—Child welfare. An equal number of bureaus were established under the Department of Civil Affairs to deal with these problems respectively.

At the same time, under the Department of Military Affairs, a bureau of French Military Affairs was created to coöperate with the French in canteen and hospital work. The Red Cross decided to engage in this work by special request of the French authorities. Not only was such assistance needed, particularly by the canteens, but the Government had in view the great moral effect that visible American coöperation would have among the French troops and the importance of making it evident at once.

These several activities upon which the Red Cross was

about to embark entailed a vast amount of preliminary organizing. All the existing private American relief agencies and societies working in France were, according to the express wish of the French government and the President of the United States, invited to merge their interests as thoroughly as possible with that of the Red Cross which was henceforth to act as the official distributor of America's funds and supplies for war relief in France. A personnel sufficient in size and capability to handle the work had to be engaged in the United States and shipped to France without delay; a Headquarters for the executive established in Paris; arrangements made whereby the thirteen ports of France would receive goods destined for the American Red Cross; main and sub-warehouses bought, hired or built; hospital and canteen formations created and, as the French government held control of all railways, devoting them first and foremost to the use of its army requirements, a transportation system had to be built up that would serve the needs of the Red Cross.

Starting with a personnel of about twenty, by January, 1919, there were over six thousand men and women working for the American Red Cross in France. The first recommendation of the Transportation Department for one hundred and fifty motor cars was considered by some at that time as absurdly large, but when the armistice was declared there were two thousand Red Cross cars in use. It might be added that in spite of these impressive figures the organization was frequently called upon to do emergency work that required a larger personnel and more means of transportation than it possessed.

On arriving in France the American Red Cross found three existing relief organizations operating cars: the American Clearing House, the Norton-Harjes Ambulance Service and the American Distributing Service. The latter two were distinctly and wholly devoted to carrying on hospital work, only the first named having to do with

civilian service and this, mainly acting through French public channels as a sort of private express company to deliver packages from the United States. It had but six trucks and two cars of its own, nearly all in Paris. Manifestly for the plans of the American Red Cross this was utterly inadequate. In taking over these three agencies the organization found by far the most important asset to be the long and valuable technical war experience of their leaders and men, and their knowledge of French ways.

As stated above the first recommendation of the Director of the Red Cross Transportation Department for one hundred and fifty trucks, ambulances and Ford cars seemed to the committee at first sight foolishly wasteful; but comparing this with the final number — two thousand — at the end of hostilities, one realizes how the needs of the work developed and were recognized. There were only two ports, Bordeaux and Le Havre, where goods had been received by these American agencies. The transportation director saw that the Red Cross must have arrangements in all the thirteen ports of France where American shipping entered, if it was to give effective service. These arrangements were ultimately made and for the eleven months following March 1, 1918, these thirteen ports received and handled over forty-six thousand tons of American Red Cross merchandise.

The every-day work and main function of the Transportation Department was the movement and handling of freight. Starting at the ports, from the ship it proceeded to the port warehouse, thence to Paris (or after the departmental zone system was inaugurated to the zone central warehouse), thence to the interior sub-warehouse if not ordered directly to a hospital, canteen, etc.— and often from the last warehouse to the committee in the given departmental town or village which distributed necessities to the French refugees. All the long hauls were consigned to the French railways, but always under the care of the

Transportation Department, and it required a prolonged, delicately adjusted series of negotiations with the Government authorities to obtain due recognition, on a par with war material, of American Red Cross freight and personnel. There were often eight distinct handlings of freight in France before it reached its final destination. A thorough system of checking and bills of lading, requisitioning, etc., was instituted, which showed every movement throughout the situations of its career of a piece or unit of freight, fixing responsibility for the handling and safe keeping of the same. This helps to account for the large expenditure attaching to this work as compared with the comparatively small tonnage of goods handled.

In each of the thirteen ports, port-equipment and organization were built up, varying from one manager and a clerk, to a personnel of three managers or associates, office helpers, thirty chauffeurs and garage workers, besides German prisoner labor or locally hired stevedores, with three large warehouses and fourteen motor cars, such as finally existed at Bordeaux. In nearly every departmental center where a Red Cross delegate had been installed there had to be from one to three cars with competent drivers and arrangements to keep the transport work in adequate running order.

There was also the building up of the Paris freight-service, developed from small beginnings of one railway quai and five cars to an extensive system of railway quais and river docks, including warehouses in all parts of the city with all their managers, clerks, typists, checkers and stevedores; and finally there was the "Motor Transport Corps," with its large personnel of drivers. All this meant training camps both at home and in France, garages, repair-shops in and outside of Paris, an efficient corps of skilled mechanics, carpenters, painters, etc., so that by January, 1919, there was in Paris and throughout France a total personnel of all kinds in the department of eleven hundred and sixty Americans.



At first the Red Cross tried to bring over all its cars in standardized parts from the United States; but ships' bottoms simply lacked room, so the organization was forced to buy in France whatever it could at any price to meet the first crying need.

The complicated task of getting its house in order and laying out plans of operation was undertaken with characteristic energy and pushed through speedily, but it must be said that the Red Cross built itself up with one hand while it worked with the other. Two months after the Commission landed it had begun to give assistance to the French in the form of monetary contributions to provide proper housing facilities for the refugees miserably crowded together in the poorer sections of Paris. Almost at the same time, as the workers for whom it had cabled Washington began to arrive in France, the organization embarked upon the other selected activities; coöperation with the rolling-canteens at the French front, French hospitals and schools for the reëducation of the disabled soldiers, and societies concerned with child-welfare work and the prevention of tuberculosis.

The idea at the outset was to have at least one representative of the American Red Cross in each Department of France to superintend the relief work among the refugees therein. Great difficulty was found in securing trained workers for this purpose, but little by little the staff was built up. The first relief delegates were actually sent out to the Provinces in December, 1917. By the end of the summer of 1918 the American Red Cross Bureau of Refugees was represented in every Department outside of the War Zone by a delegate clothed with broad powers and supported by a completely organized system of transport and supplies at Headquarters. A special Bureau of the War Zone was also created which endeavored to provide relief for the civilian population as they fled from or returned to that area according to the movements of the contending armies.

During the same period the Children's Bureau was represented by activities in all the large centers of population such as Paris, Lyon, Bordeaux, Toulouse, Dijon, etc., comprising dispensaries, refuges, crèches, school-lunches, and, more fundamentally, careful educational campaigns that put before the people in an attractive manner all the principles of child-welfare work.

Similarly, the work of the Tuberculosis Bureau was marked by extremely thoughtful surveys of the entire country, with consistent instructive assistance to existing French institutions and the establishment of four large institutions of its own.

Close collaboration with the intensive and effective work of the Friends' Unit gave the keynote to the character of much of the social work.

The activities of all these bureaus necessarily overlapped, some dispensaries existing under the management of the Bureau of Refugees and some relief work under the other bureaus. In the following chapters it was not considered necessary always to make a sharp distinction.

The outstanding feature of the entire work was the broad and comprehensive foundation upon which it was built, which was made possible by the experience and vision of the men chosen to inaugurate it and carry it on.

To help France to help herself was the thought at the back of every effort in every bureau. The delegates of the Bureau of Refugees recommended that American Red Cross clothing and furniture should be sold, at cost prices or less, rather than given to the refugee population, thus recognizing that they were not dealing with an indigent people, but with one that was temporarily suffering from causes beyond its control. America offered the hand of a friend to a friend in need and in no sense assumed the attitude of a benefactress.

Has this effort left its impress upon France? Will anything permanent remain to indicate the immense expenditure of energy and material so bountifully and gladly

contributed by the men, women, and children of the United States? We are perhaps too near to see clearly the answer to these questions, but of the grateful appreciation of that portion of the French people which from personal experience knows the work accomplished and the manner in which it was done, there can be small doubt. Unquestionably also our methods of organization and directness of action, and particularly the American idea (not new in theory but actually new in practice in France) of responsibility to the community and of social service, have made a deep impression. That the men and women who have done the work of civilian relief in France will take back to the United States an appreciation of the privilege given them in carrying out the mandate of the American people, there can be no shadow of doubt whatsoever.



## CHAPTER III

### WITH FRENCH HOSPITALS

SOON after the outbreak of the war the American Red Cross organized an expedition for relief work abroad. The S.S. *Red Cross*, chartered by the association, crossed the Atlantic in September, 1914, carrying surgeons and nurses and a large amount of medical supplies for the warring nations of Europe without regard to nationality. The field was vast and the little force, broken up into its various units, was widely scattered and almost overwhelmed by the needs of the situation. They accomplished excellent work, but in most cases their existence was comparatively ephemeral. The unit dispatched to France equipped at Pau a hospital of two hundred beds which it operated for one year. Its personnel was then removed, part of it being transferred to Belgium. For eight months or so another unit assisted Dr. Fitch in his orthopedic work for the French Army. The American Ambulance at Neuilly was helped by the organization, and various French institutions were given aid in the form of money, supplies, or personnel for certain periods of time, but the plan of the American Red Cross was not to concentrate its activities for the benefit of any one nation, but to distribute them as impartially as possible.

With the entry of the United States into the war this plan was automatically changed. The Red Cross became the official American relief organization and made ready to put at the disposal of the A. E. F. and their allies all the resources with which the people of the United

States had generously endowed it. Soon after its arrival in France, following upon conferences with the Government, it began among other activities its plans for hospital coöperation with the French. In accordance with these plans the Medical Department of the Red Cross took complete control over some existing hospitals, assisted others and inaugurated new but similar activities, such as the invaluable dispensary work for the civilian population at those points which, through the exigencies of war, were most in need of medical aid.

The main object of the Medical Department was to prepare plans and collect supplies against the future hospital needs of the American Army. Its activities with and in behalf of the French Army were secondary, but in most cases these redounded to the advantage of our own men as well. A few hospitals, such as Nos. 1 and 2, were operated with the deliberate intention of caring for the wounded of both nations. No. 1, originally the American Ambulance Hospital at Neuilly, was supported and run by the Red Cross and the United States Army, and its five hundred or more beds and its dental clinic were at the disposal of the French. In connection with this formation the Red Cross maintained a thoroughly equipped sanitary train to bring back the French wounded from the front and an ambulance service that carried the wounded for the Paris district. Though the director was an American Army officer the Red Cross had the entire medical and surgical management of the hospital.

No. 2, formerly known as Dr. Blake's hospital, had like No. 1 been one of the chief relief activities through which American sympathy for the French found practical expression during the first years of the war. Of its three hundred beds, one hundred were reserved for French wounded. In this hospital was situated the Red Cross Research Laboratory where a corps of bacteriologists carried on a series of important investigations into the original causes of maladies common to soldiers.

At Annel, Cugny, Évreux, and Soissons existing hospitals were taken over by the Red Cross and operated for the French soldiers, and a fifth was constructed at Neufchateau for the civil population in connection with the Red Cross dispensary work whose center was established in that town. Diet kitchens were contributed to a number of hospitals to provide for the needs of those who were too ill to take the regular hospital fare and these proved to be of great assistance to the doctors in feeding patients suffering from wounds in the jaw. As in the case of Franco-American canteen coöperation an amount of data was gathered in the course of these early hospital activities—the kitchen collected a large store of special diet delicacies as well—that later on were useful to the Red Cross in its work with our own forces.

The branch of Red Cross hospital coöperation with the French that was most widely spread was the so-called *Service de Santé*, the need of which arose out of the situation caused by the brigading of American troops with the armies of our allies. Under this brigading system it was obvious that many of our wounded, instead of being cared for at our own hospitals, must be sent directly to those belonging to the French and English medical corps. The French especially were short of nursing personnel, but the Red Cross did not undertake the work with the view of relieving the French of this extra burden, the realization that the presence of a woman from their own country would prove a factor of importance in the welfare of our wounded soldiers who might be sent among foreigners, playing a large part in its decision.

Every one concerned saw that the situation could be best handled through the American Red Cross and accordingly the United States Army requested the organization to take care of such cases as might occur. An arrangement was entered into with the French *Service de Santé* by which their hospital officials were instructed to send notifications of the arrival of any American wounded to

the Red Cross which was then expected to furnish units to care for such patients. These units were composed of a nurse and a French-speaking aid who in addition to her routine work was expected to act as interpreter. On arriving at the hospital to which they had been sent they reported to the *Médecin Chef* who assigned them to their duties and returned them, on the evacuation of the American patients, to the Red Cross, or if an emergency arose obtained permission from that organization to reassign them to some other French hospital where their services were needed.

The system was flexible and permitted of that quick, concerted action so important in all medical work. Its results were even more gratifying than had been expected. The units not only brought the abundance of the Red Cross to the lonely American wounded, but also a professional skill that was superior to that of the French nurses. Moreover, as the latter were no more proficient in the English language than the great majority of the American soldiers were in the French, the difficulties of communication between them can be imagined.

For example a Red Cross nurse on arriving at a French hospital found a number of the personnel in consultation over her prospective patient. She had been notified that his injuries were severe and this ominous bedside gathering pointed to a hemorrhage or a collapse. She was quickly reassured by the look of relief and hope that appeared on the doughboy's face when he saw her and his heartfelt exclamation: "For God's sake, Miss, tell them I'm comfortable!" The soldier had sneezed while asleep and the convulsive movement had changed the position of one of his legs, both of which were broken. The French nurse came to his aid and straightened the leg, but when he tried to tell her that she had made him comfortable she imagined the reverse and in attempting, with the help of several orderlies, to better conditions for the patient, was making matters decidedly worse. Instances of this kind, of a

lesser or a graver nature, were constantly occurring when no American nurses were in attendance.

As had been foreseen the companionship of the Red Cross nurse was of tonic value to the American stranded in a French hospital. He felt sure of her sympathy and had confidence in her ability. She brought him also material comforts in the shape of fruit, eggs, milk, chicken, chocolate, tobacco: delicacies ordinarily unobtainable in French hospitals and for the purchase of which each nurse was allowed a certain amount of money by the Red Cross. The breakfast that sufficed for the *poilu* did not satisfy the sturdy doughboy — he did not “pick up” on it as one says — and it was the business of the nurse to add to the menu what his appetite demanded. She wrote his letters when he was unable to handle a pen, and if he was troubled about his home affairs she set the machinery of the Home Service Department of the Red Cross to work upon the case. She brought him magazines and papers and gifts from the stores of the organization, pajamas, toilet articles, back-rests, hot-water bags, games — all the dozen and one comforts of the sick-room.

Sometimes however she encountered wants that the organization had not foreseen. In one of the wards in charge of a Red Cross unit an Arabian officer was received. He was a victim of mustard gas and so fearfully burned that the hands of the nurses were blistered as they undressed him. His pride, however, was paramount to his sufferings and the degradation of being put to bed in a white nightgown was a thing not to be borne. Drawing up his bleeding body to its full height, he demanded a “shirt of color.” Ignorant of the indignity involved the nurses endeavored to make him wear the nightgown; but the chieftain resolutely refused it and, not obtaining the substitute he wanted, put himself between the clean sheets and died thus, naked and true to his principles.

From another and more important angle the anecdote



also throws light upon the situation as it developed in the wards of these French hospitals. Originally intended to look after our own men the system happily proved to be of considerable benefit to the French and the soldiers of other nations fighting at her side. It seldom happened that the number of American patients in any one French hospital at a given time was large, often not more than three or four, too few to exact full working time from the Red Cross nurses who therefore invariably made a point of sharing in the care of the rest of the ward. With the other nurses they tended the sick and wounded French, British, Australian, Senegambian, Siamese, all the unfortunates whatever their nationality that drifted in from the polyglot forces. And these well-trained women, superior as a rule in skill, education and initiative to their French companions, accomplished an enormous amount of work in a way that was equally satisfactory to both doctors and patients.

It not infrequently occurred that a unit would be asked for to meet an expected influx of American patients who failed to materialize after all at that particular hospital. The nurses then remained to work among the French while awaiting another call which might not come for a month or two. In such intervals their coöperation was naturally of the greatest assistance to the physicians who, as already stated, rarely had a sufficiently large nursing personnel at their command. Even when there were American patients the French largely outnumbered them in the majority of cases and they shared not only the professional attentions of the Red Cross nurses, but also the delicacies and other gifts the organization provided. A punctilious distribution of these extras among all the patients of their ward was regularly observed by the nurses. Instances where small numbers of American wounded came and went with long gaps between, during which the Red Cross units were busy at the French *triage* hospitals, where the wounded men were first received, are frequently registered

in the nurses' reports and on the other side the French records show the high valuation set on the fine, disinterested service performed by these women.

The strenuous and varied work the Red Cross nurses were called upon to perform is well illustrated by the case of a unit sent to Coulommiers when the Germans at Château-Thierry were being forced back by American troops. On the arrival of the unit at the French hospital that had issued the call it found that all the American wounded were being taken care of at one of our own evacuation hospitals. A train-load of fifteen hundred American patients, however, was being sent on to Nantes that night in charge of French personnel, none of whom could speak a word of English. The nurses gladly accepted the opportunity to be of service to these men en route. Hurrying from the hospital they reached the station just in time to catch the train and during the eighteen hour journey that followed they were on their feet practically every moment, explaining the wants of the patients to the orderlies, calling the attention of the doctor to the worst cases, and easing in innumerable ways the discomforts and sufferings of their countrymen.

The next day they returned to their starting point and were assigned to the *triage* hospital to care for the French *petits blessés*. For four weeks they devoted themselves to this work, at the end of which time the American evacuation hospital moved from the town, leaving those of its patients who were too ill to be taken, in the care of the Red Cross unit. American wounded were also beginning to arrive from the field and these also were nursed by the two Red Cross women. These men were scattered about the big rambling French hospital, one here and one there, wherever there was a bed to receive them, which did not simplify the duties of their attendants. Yet the nurse and her aid found spare moments enough to run a little kitchen from which they served eggs, tea, toast, and jam



to the men of an American division passing through on its way to the front. Hardly was this extra work finished when twenty new patients were brought to them from a near by camp of engineers into which a German aëroplane had dropped a bomb.

Then the virulent Spanish influenza swept through the region and the Red Cross unit was called upon for aid. Fortunately the majority of the American wounded had been evacuated. The nurses were put in charge of about one hundred French soldiers down with the disease and they were still nursing them when once more the interrupted stream of wounded, who had a prior claim for attention, began to flow in. In the middle of October the unit was recalled to Paris after three months of duty which, though less monotonous than the experiences of some, was not more arduous. The proving of the mental and physical stamina of the women who enlisted in this and similar forms of Red Cross service was one of the striking facts demonstrated by the war.

Where all duties were so faithfully and efficiently done it is rather invidious to give special mention to any one piece of work, but for several reasons that of Dr. Fitch's hospital was of more than ordinary importance. In the first place the Red Cross had given this hospital assistance early in the war. At the end of eight months it had withdrawn the unit lent and terminated its official connection with the hospital, then stationed at St. Valéry-en-Caux; but it had continued to send frequent gifts of money and supplies. In particular one Red Cross Chapter in the state of New York never failed throughout the war to contribute a regular monthly sum toward its support.

In 1917, at the request of the French authorities, the hospital with its American staff moved to Évreux to take charge of all the bone surgery of the French Third region. The French assumed all the expenses of the hospital except the salaries of the staff whose income depended upon donations irregularly received from friends at home. Such a

precarious arrangement made its preservation something of a problem and as the Red Cross was anxious to affiliate with itself all American relief organizations the hospital at Évreux welcomed the opportunity for an alliance.

By the conditions under which this was consummated the Red Cross guaranteed to supply a sufficient number of nurses and pay them their salaries as well as the running expenses of the staff, to which it added a bacteriologist; it also provided that most necessary adjunct to an orthopedic hospital, a well-equipped laboratory, and a recreation building for convalescents. The object of the formation remained the same; that is, it was still a French military hospital.

The spring offensive of 1918 wrought many changes. The loss of territory suffered by the French with the consequent loss of hospital formations made necessary a rapid preparation of new accommodations for the wounded. As Évreux offered a good opportunity for enlargement the Red Cross asked permission of the French government to take over the formation for the time and put it at the disposal of American as well as French wounded. The request was granted and the Red Cross raised the number of beds from three hundred and fifty to about seven hundred and fifty, paying all the expenses of construction and furnishing all the needed supplies.

The beds were filled almost before they were ready. The doctors were busy in the operating rooms all day long and on the arrival of each new batch of patients the nurses were often called upon to work as much as eighteen hours at a stretch, sometimes with no time off for meals. One large convoy of Americans was received in July and our wounded frequently came in with the French convoys, but the majority of cases were French. In the citation received by one of the Red Cross nurses of this unit the French spoke of their affection for these women who had come so far to dress their wounds.

From the first of October till the hospital was returned

to the French at the end of December the Red Cross bore all expenses, though the French *Médecin Chef* and personnel, such as the orderlies and the maids, were kept. During this period very few of the beds were ever empty. The Red Cross work at Évreux did not end here. There were refugees as well as wounded soldiers in the town and the Red Cross fed and clothed hundreds that passed through and gave employment to many who stayed. The field of its activities included the civil population of the town which was almost entirely without medical and surgical aid. Influenza and other diseases were rife and the Red Cross units did all in their power to help the sick and the needy.

The service was one demanding great tact and adaptability of the Red Cross units since in every case they were under the direction of French physicians and surgeons who were not accustomed to our system of nursing. To the credit of both parties the results were even more gratifying than had been expected. The Red Cross women left a record behind them with which they can well be satisfied; but they could not have accomplished all that they did if it had not been for the appreciative attitude of the French. The best accommodations obtainable and the most courteous treatment were always given the units who were made to feel that the nation was grateful for their coöperation.

A French surgeon who came in contact with our units was so favorably impressed that he planned to establish a model training school after the war with an American head nurse, which should not only train French nurses after our standards but also attract an equally fine class of women into the service. It is not improbable that the demonstration of American nursing methods may arouse a general desire among the French medical profession to have a similar corps of nurses in their own country. If this should happen it would not be one of the least gratifying results of Red Cross relations with the French.

## CHAPTER IV

### *CANTINES AU FRONT*

AT the time when the Red Cross, by the advice of the French authorities, decided to assist in the founding and maintenance of canteens at the French front, the railway systems were badly congested. When one considers the situation in detail the wonder grows that their service was as effective as it was. At the outset of hostilities they had suffered a double blow in the loss of some forty-five thousand cars and locomotives and the main source of their fuel supply, the coal fields of the north. It was difficult indeed to make good the loss of the first; in fact throughout the war it was almost impossible to find time to make even the repairs necessary to keep the rolling-stock in working order. There was always not only a shortage of stock and fuel, but also of the skilled railway labor urgently needed to replace that drafted into the army.

After 1915 the seven armies of France exacted for their maintenance the use of two hundred trains a day, a figure that does not include those required for the British forces. Outside of these supply trains the movement to and from the front of soldiers and men engaged in military affairs was enormous. The Orleans system alone transported in 1917 more than eight million such passengers. Italy, who had always depended upon Germany for the bulk of her coal, was now obliged to get it from England, via the burdened railways of France. In addition to all the strictly emergency traffic there had to be kept up the great volume of that normal one necessary to the life of the civil population and its commercial transactions.

Broadly speaking, the principle on which the French systems had been constructed was the linking of Paris to all the ports and the chief cities of France. The war created new currents that neither the main nor the transverse lines could take. The advent of the American troops, who had to be transported to widely scattered camps and billets and supplied with everything necessary to their maintenance, increased largely this particular difficulty. To cope with the situation France was obliged to build new lines while laboring to meet the demands on the existing ones. In all she constructed seven thousand kilometers during the war, besides a large number of freight-yards, storehouses, and terminals.

These are a few of the more prominent features of the railway tangle that complicated her task and that of the American Red Cross as well. It is necessary to bear them in mind; but there is no intention here to criticize the personnel of the systems, whose admirable and devoted service merits the highest praise.

The congestion of traffic brought much discomfort and even suffering to the French troops passing through the railway stations daily in great numbers. Thousands were detained en route, often for more than a day or a night, packed in close cars or encamped by the side of the track without shelter and with little or no food. If it was night they slept on the bare ground, whatever the weather. There was a stimulus at the front that raised the soldier above himself, but back of the lines he became an ordinary human being. In the reaction that set in there he had the time and the inclination to think of his aches and pains; of his empty belly, his cold and foul person, and the vermin with which he was infested. If his home was far away he often had no place in which to spend his *permission*. If he was returning to the front the horrors he must face gained additional weight by contrast with the comfort and security of the fireside he was leaving. It was the hour when his spirits were at their lowest, when he could appre-



ciate most keenly any sympathetic effort to contribute to his welfare.

The French were quite alive to the mental condition of the soldier under such circumstances. One of their generals had sent the following warning to the War Ministry: "In view of keeping up the spirits of the troops it is indispensable that soldiers on leave be able to find, while waiting at railway stations in the course of their journeys, canteens which will allow them to have comfortable rest and refreshment. Good results have already been attained in that direction, but it is necessary to improve the canteens already existing and to create new ones in stations that do not have them."

Such was the situation to which the attention of the American Red Cross had been directed and to the betterment of which it at once took steps. No other plan could have assured the giving of material aid to the soldier so promptly or opened a surer means for the wide dissemination among the army of the news that America was actually in the war.

The types of existing French canteens were three: portable ones operating at the front; those operating on the lines of communication, called L.O.C. canteens, and the metropolitan canteens, which were established in Paris and on the *Grande Ceinture*, a belt line that forms a wide circle round the capital and connects the railways of the East, Vincennes, Lyon, and Orleans. This line made it possible to carry the troops going beyond Paris in any direction, around instead of through that teeming city. The threefold system worked out by the French was well-designed to meet their most pressing canteen needs, but owing to the lack of money and personnel the plan had not been fully carried out. It was to supply the deficiencies in the operation of the system that the American Red Cross was asked to give its assistance to the canteen service.

During the period of its conferences with the French authorities on the matter of active participation the Red

Cross contributed large quantities of supplies to some of the more needy Metropolitan canteens. Its next step was a direct coöperation with the French Army service at the front. It undertook to finance fifteen of the portable or "rolling" canteens (the number was more than doubled later); to provide all the requisite foodstuffs and new material and to send one Red Cross representative to each crew as a working member thereof. The French had introduced this type in 1917 with great success, placing them under the control of the Sanitary Corps. A crew consisted of not more than three men including the chief, or convoyer, to whom was given the honorary rank of Second Lieutenant. As a rule they were men who through wounds received in the war or other disabilities were physically unfit for fighting. Sons of titled families, many of them, they cleaned their kitchens, chopped wood for the fires or drew water as faithfully as their peasant companions.

These little canteens tucked themselves in as close as possible behind the front lines. For the first seven months of the Red Cross service the French troops were comparatively stable, but in March and thereafter, when the Germans began their new drive, followed by counter attacks of the Allies, came a succession of violent bending movements, great oscillations of the lines, that added fresh difficulties to the situation. The canteens had to carry out their duties with the same exactitude demanded of the rest of the army. Whatever the fluctuations of the section to which they were attached they were expected to be at their posts sooner or later. The majority were therefore under fire practically every day and for this reason they usually operated only at night or between the hours of 2 A. M. and the first flush of dawn when there was the least danger from the shells of the enemy. After daybreak the French troops were not allowed to gather at the "stations" as the enemy were always quick to discover such tempting targets.

Only liquids such as tea, coffee, bouillon, cocoa, or



chocolate and lemonade were served. Water could be obtained wherever the little mobile kitchen was established and such solid ingredients as were used could easily be carried. A fire — frequently made from the splintered beams of a shattered house — the small blue cart and the steaming metal marmites constituted the station, which more often than not was posted on the cross-roads; deadly spots but convenient for intercepting the troops in their shadowy ebb and flow.

Granted time enough to settle down to their savory work these methodical little *cantines au front* threw out advance posts, in many cases to within one or two hundred yards of the German lines. Roughly each canteen covered a sector about twelve miles in length. From their outposts they reached the fighting men in the chill and slime of the first trenches or waiting tensely for the word to execute or repel a long-expected attack. The carrier from the canteen, his *bidon* or can strapped on his back, made his way out to the annexes, sometimes with his belly to the ground like an Indian on a stalk, and picking his course by the white slash of the enemy's star-shells. He had his reward in the welcome of the poilus. Those *bidons* of hot, well-sugared chocolate put heart into many a man weakened by cold, fatigue, and nervous strain.

"Before leaving this sector I wish most particularly to thank you, on my own behalf, and in the name of all my brave old poilus for the inestimable service that your canteens at the front have rendered in the Vosges. . . . I beg you to express to the American Red Cross my deepest thanks and also the gratitude of my brave soldiers who, during the last winter in the mountains, benefited so greatly from the generous donations of your society," wrote Colonel De Vaux of the French Army to a Red Cross conveyer. General Rémond praises the work of another canteen. "The men of my division have particularly benefited by the distribution of hot drinks which the American Red Cross Canteen established near Verdun, served out

every night with unlimited and touching activity to the detachments coming down from the lines. I desire in the name of my soldiers to say to you with all my heart: 'Thanks.' They do not forget any more than I do the work that the American Red Cross is doing and the devotion with which you presided at the distribution at all hours of the night." These are but brief examples of many letters written in the same tenor.

A few of the stations were on comparatively quiet sectors, but where the French troops were there was usually enough action to ensure the convoyer a life of excitement and danger with plenty of hard work thrown in. Often he lived like a marmot during his daylight hours, lying in an abri or a corner of a wrecked building, or under some improvised shelter, emerging at nightfall to resume his duties. Most of the time he was quite as cold and wet and lousy as any of the poilus he served. He stood by his rolling kitchen as the artilleryman stood by his gun and when the line bent back it was up to him to see that his paraphernalia did not fall into the hands of the enemy.

These canteens were so close to the lines, however, that an effective withdrawal was not always possible. That at Châlons-sur-Vesle, about seven miles west of Rheims, was captured with all its supplies during the German attack in May. The main post at Mont de Senilly, north of Soissons, was destroyed by shells in the March drive. A new station was set up at Chavigny, only to be captured by the enemy two months later. The canteens at the Ferme de Monaco, Roncey, and Rilly-la-Montagne were either captured or destroyed. A number of the workers were wounded and one Red Cross convoyer was killed by the explosion of a shell. Several received citations and the *Croix de Guerre* for bravery and devotion to duty under heavy fire.

After the fall of 1917 the canteens served in all the major operations on the French front; in the notable battles of La Malmaison and Flanders; the great German drives

of March and May; the French counter-stroke of July 18; in all the subsequent fighting of the First, Third, and Tenth Armies and in the Champagne offensive of September, 1918.

The value of the work done by the convoyers was out of all proportion to their comparatively small number. A total of nearly six million drinks were served by them and at just those moments when the soldiers most needed and could not otherwise obtain such physical stimulants; but of even greater importance perhaps was the significance of their presence. They visualized for the fighting poilus, many of whom never came in contact with any other Americans, our actual participation in the war. They had heard we were coming and they were watching for us. With what eagerness is shown by their response to the arrival of the Red Cross convoyers for though the personnel of the little canteens was usually two-thirds French, they immediately became known as "the American canteens." It was this waiting chord that the Red Cross hoped to strike at once, by this and other means, because a successful touch upon it meant the transmission of hope and confidence along the weary French front.

## CHAPTER V

### *CANTINES DES DEUX DRAPEAUX*

THE arteries of the War Zone area along whose western rim the battle raged, were the French lines of communication. To and fro on the railways covering this zone, roughly corresponding in size to the State of New York, there was an incessant movement of an enormous number of fresh troops, of exhausted men on permission and on temporary billets, and of wounded soldiers. As the French authorities had advised, the situation offered to the Red Cross another obvious channel along which its message could flow.

By the terms on which the L.O.C. canteen collaboration was finally settled the French were required to furnish the necessary buildings and provide electric light, running water and coal for heating purposes, while the Red Cross undertook to supply the cooking appliances, the coal for cooking, all the medical and equipment stores and the personnel. Later the Red Cross was allowed to purchase supplies of the French commissariat at military rates, without which proviso it could hardly have carried out its share of the contract.

With such an arrangement in force the Red Cross declared itself ready to serve a meal of hot soup, roast meat, vegetables, bread and coffee for seventy-five centimes a head, with various extras like eggs, salads, jams, ham, etc., no one of which should cost more than thirty centimes. Beer, wine and spirits were prohibited in all the American Red Cross canteens. These conditions were accepted by the French, who submitted a list of stations where the need of American assistance was most urgent, and on September

17, 1917, the first canteen on the lines of communication was opened at Châlons-sur-Marne. In October one was established at Épernay and later at each of the following stations, Orry-la-Ville, Survilliers, and St. Germain-des-Fosses. The coöperation of France and the United States was symbolized in a way that no soldier, no matter how unlettered, could misinterpret, by signboards bearing the tricolor and the Stars and Stripes, and the canteens were known officially as the *Cantines des Deux Drapeaux*.

The canteens in some cases were single buildings, in others groups of three, four, or five, depending upon the size and importance of their "business." Their low, barrack-like shape and the necessity of placing them in the railroad yards, or as close to the stations as possible, did not make for external picturesqueness, but efforts were never lacking to give them an air of comfort. Sometimes small gardens and vines relieved the general bareness and internally at least the general effect was attractive, thanks to the French camouflage artists who decorated the walls with skillful, simple designs in color. This was not so small a matter as might appear for the spirits of every soldier from the camp or the trench responded gratefully to surroundings that pleased his eye. The *poilu* was perhaps particularly susceptible to the appeal of the artistic.

Generally speaking the operating system of all the *Cantines des Deux Drapeaux* was the same. The large ones were kept open night and day by a small force of attendants who worked in rotation in six-hour shifts. One attendant presided at a desk near the door of the building where the food was served. The soldier as he entered bought his meal tickets at this desk and passed on to a counter divided by three partitions. At the first compartment he received his bowl of soup together with a fork and spoon for which he paid thirty centimes apiece, the money being refunded when the implements were returned, a process not always understood by the economical *poilu*. At the second division a third attendant handed him his



meat, vegetables, and bread, and at the last a fourth supplied the cup of coffee or chocolate. French assistants kept bowls and meat plates filled and ready for the attendants to hand out. This simple system ensured speed without confusion and enabled the Red Cross workers to come directly into contact with the French soldiers. In addition there was a Directress or "housekeeper," who attended to the buying and distribution of all supplies, kept the accounts, looked after the laundry, cut the bread for the next shift — a matter of ninety pounds or so at the large canteens — and weighed the garbage, bones, and bread crumbs, all of which were frugally sold to various purchasers, so that her position had its duties as well as its honors.

At stations like Châlons-sur-Marne and Épernay for example the canteen proper had several annexes. Between 7:30 A. M. and 9 A. M. the canteen shut its doors while its floor was swept and fresh sawdust spread upon it and its tables cleaned. In that interval the soldiers could get bread and coffee at the "foyer" whose main purpose was that of a room for rest and recreation. They found there writing materials and magazines, checkers and cards, and for those who liked music there was a phonograph and a piano. In summer the soldiers, after the French custom, often sat in the garden, but the foyer was always the favorite lounging place and every evening — the custom was to keep it open till 11 P. M. — it was patronized to the point of suffocation.

To realize what these canteen units meant to the poilus one must understand the conditions of railway travel as they were at that time. The soldiers were packed into the trains like cattle, till each car contained nearly double its ordinary quota of passengers. The first few to get aboard obtained seats, when there were any seats, but the majority had to stand for hours, sweltering in the heat or shivering with cold according to the season. The journeys were almost invariably performed under cover of the darkness, and sleep was practically unobtainable even for the most

weary. The air soon became so intolerably stale and so heavy with tobacco smoke that the men were half suffocated. They could not ease their cramped limbs by a change of position as they were jammed together in a mass so compact that no one could move unless he moved a neighbor also. Efforts to obtain relief in this direction were seldom repeated, but occasionally the train on being sharply shunted to a side track or in rounding a curve accomplished a violent shifting of its gargo *en masse* to the accompaniment of oaths and groans. It was the epitome of discomfort and when the cars finally drew up at a station and disgorged their sore, exasperated contents the physical and mental cheer of the canteen was absorbed as gratefully by the poilus as parched soil drinks of a summer shower.

One can realize how agreeable it must have been to talk with the attendants in their crisp costumes; to be served with hot stimulating drinks and good food in a clean and pleasant room; to rest and sing and write letters if one wished; in a word, to feel that one had risen from a mere cipher in a driven herd to the dignity of a human being. And nothing counted more in this renewal of spirits and self-respect than the presence of the gracious, loyal women. It gave the final subtle touch. Courage and chivalry the man's part; devotion the woman's. That these capped and aproned women had cared enough to cross the ocean in order to serve France in this menial capacity showed the poilu that America's heart and hand were with him. It is not to be doubted that the knowledge of this was of some benefit to his morale.

Sometimes unlucky troops passed through these stations that were allowed to disembark only for a few minutes, or not at all, and then the canteen "platform service" came into play. Rapidity was an essential element of all the work at all times, but on such occasions there was a race against time and often a losing one; but the majority of the men received a hot drink and the disappointed ones, being



Frenchmen, were gallant enough to take the will for the deed. The speed at which the attendants were obliged to work is indicated by the fact that the average number of lunches served in three-quarters of an hour were two hundred and twenty-three. More than five thousand men passed through and were cared for at the larger canteen stations daily.

One cannot praise too highly the courage, resourcefulness and endurance of these Red Cross women, few of whom had ever had any previous experience in any form of work requiring physical effort. Many of them must have felt, quite as poignantly as any soldier, the pangs of homesickness whose insidious power to undermine morale is recognized by all armies. Comfort was not to be expected. Certainly it was rarely obtained since the billets of the workers were generally within the War Zone where life was stripped of everything but the absolute essentials. The stations were frequently under the fire of German guns and *aéroplanes*, and influenza was always prevalent, fresh germs being constantly brought in by new troops. The women had their share of sickness and often kept on with their work when they were physically unfit even to wait on themselves. There were periods when the various groups were crippled by losses through illness and such situations were complicated by the difficulties of securing medical aid.

As if their regular duties were not enough the Red Cross women never failed to welcome an opportunity to be of service in other directions. The records are full of instances. At Chichey they carried food to three Polish regiments who in some unaccountable way seemed to be stranded there, and when the Spanish influenza broke out among these men the refreshments and delicacies they received from the canteen played a decided part, according to the opinion of the medical staff, in keeping the epidemic under control. When the great explosion occurred at the ammunition factory at Moulins and communications were

cut off owing to the destruction of part of the railway lines the canteen camion of St. Germain-des-Fosses rendered valuable service by making runs to Vichy for medical and other supplies.

This canteen tended many French wounded on the trains and hundreds of refugees as they streamed from the battle zone. Similar work was done by all the L.O.C. canteens. During the worst period of the bombardment to which the town was subjected the Red Cross personnel at Châlons-sur-Marne established a nightly automobile service that carried old people, children and delicate women to places of shelter. At Orry-la-Ville they distributed food and tobacco at a French field hospital, and also gave what other aid they could. At Épernay in particular the canteen attendants did splendid work when the evacuation hospitals were filled to overflowing during the month of May and the very small force of doctors and nurses could not begin to care for all the patients.

The scenes at Épernay during those weeks of the French counter-attack will never be forgotten by those who witnessed them. The wounded came in such numbers that many could not be attended to for several days. Men lay about on stretchers on the station platform and in the hospital yard, often without coverings of any kind. Most of them were French, but a few were Englishmen whose tags the French doctors were unable to read. The American volunteer nurses from the canteen translated the inscriptions and picked out those requiring immediate attention, thus in all probability saving the lives of many of the poor fellows. They assisted also in the operating room and acted as interpreters between the French and English doctors who came later to help in the crisis.

During the most critical period volunteers and regular personnel worked from eighteen to twenty-two hours a day, and the Red Cross representatives kept the canteen running at the same time, though fortunately the volume of its business had momentarily decreased as the

troops were being rushed to the front without a halt. For a week none of the Red Cross workers slept more than two or three hours a night, and what little rest they could obtain was frequently broken by the enemy's bombardments.

Every hour of life at these canteens was full of the stress and confusion of war, and the sympathies of the workers were always on the rack. It was difficult to meet cheerfully these thousands of men hurrying to the call of the guns. It was still more painful to see the train-loads of their wounded return and to know that others had made their last brave journey. The human tide surged ceaselessly back and forth, leaving its grim sediment; each advancing wave of troops filled with the quiet courage and resolve that had taken the place of the confident *élan* of earlier days; each spent wave bearing itself uncomplainingly as it receded. The fortitude of the men helped to steady the nerves of the canteen workers, as their devoted efforts were of benefit to the morale of the men.

More than one Red Cross woman found the patience of the *poilu* the most inspiring as well as the most pathetic feature in her work. She had expected more dramatic, perhaps more theatrical traits, but none could have impressed her so much as this unforeseen one. It made her realize what the country had suffered, but how unconquerable it was; it showed of what stuff the real France was made.

In addition to finding the soldier more patient than her mental picture of him, the canteen worker saw that he was older also. The reason of this was not hard to grasp. The young men of France had been the vanguard, the ones who had gone to battle first, with the same fire and confidence that America's youthful army was to show later. The losses among such troops are always great when the enemy is skillful. It has been said of our men that they were splendid fighters rather than perfect soldiers, a statement that might have been applied with equal justice, perhaps, to the first young troops of France. Both had the dash and recklessness and the inexperience of youth. The

poilu that the canteen workers saw in 1917 was a tried soldier, the father of a family usually, a man already weighted with the responsibilities of life, who was past the age of heroic dreams. He felt none of the glamour of war. To him it was only a stupid, horrible thing that he must contend with philosophically and doggedly, till the last threatening spark expired under his heel.

If there were any Red Cross women who entered the canteen service with the spirit of the charity worker in its smaller sense, it is safe to say that close contact with France and her poilus brought about a revulsion of feeling. If they had not learned it before they learned then the whole truth about Germany and the war she had forced upon the world and henceforth, without blaming their own country for her eleventh-hour entry, they could think of every detail and every dollar of her participation, not as alms for the Allies, but as their due.

At the outset of its coöperation with the French Red Cross knowledge of canteen work was purely theoretical and the experience gained proved of much value in the more extensive system inaugurated later for the United States Army. This was simply a coincidence. The object that the Red Cross had in view and which it successfully accomplished was the giving of immediate aid to our ally. While it was impossible to keep accurate records in every case it is safe to say that the Franco-American canteens served on an average the splendid total of one million men a month. With the rapid growth of the A.E.F. and the brigading of troops in various sectors of the front the canteen attendants were also able to serve many of their countrymen with food and drinks. This was specially the case at the canteens of the Metropolitan system, several of which came completely under our control, and eventually these stations served large numbers of American troops.

The Franco-American and the A.E.F. canteens, though not always rigidly restricted in their service to any one nationality, had their separate and distinct purposes and were

run accordingly. But in times of need any allied soldier was welcome and none were turned away without a meal because they lacked the centimes to pay for it. At our French canteens it was customary to instruct one of the workers to watch for those *poilus* who were low in funds, a state which their pride usually prevented their declaring. The watcher soon learned to read the signs — a prolonged scrutiny of the menu, a selection of dishes obviously based upon their cheapness, a way of fumbling in a purse, certain facial expressions, etc.— and smoothed out the difficulty with tactful sympathy. Our own soldiers were grateful for what the Red Cross did for them, but in a way they looked upon such attentions — and rightly so — as their due. The French *poilu* never ceased to act as if he thought it a beautiful and wonderful thing that American women and American money should have been sent to aid him.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE MUTILÉS

THE peculiarly vicious and varied means of attempting the destruction of life used in the war were responsible for a huge number of permanently disabled men, the share of France alone being over six hundred thousand. The French government recognized almost immediately the problem it would have to face in caring for the maimed soldier and early in the war it outlined plans for technical aid and reëducation intended to accomplish three great factors for good: The practical and moral value of this training to the "mutilé" himself; the gain to the community by lifting one of its members out of the pauper class, and the social and economical benefit to the country and to civilization.

The experience of all neurasthenic hospitals and sanatoria has proved that work is the best cure for a diseased mind and the mind of the mutilé was seldom in a normal condition. The director of one of the largest institutions for reëducation in France found that the morale of the men on arriving was at such a low ebb that it actually seemed necessary for him to create, as one of his first installations, a cemetery for suicides. In a short while, however, the realization that they would be able to learn a trade that would furnish their own living and that of their families wrought an entire revulsion of feeling among these cripples and otherwise disabled men and lifted them from despondency to a cheerful and comparatively happy state. Once convinced that they were not to become helpless objects of charity they could appreciate the fact



that they could still eat and drink and have their friends; that, in a word, they were not dead.

The first active work undertaken by the French government for the reëducation of the war cripples began in December, 1914, at the *École Joffre* at Lyon. This school with its annex at Tourvielle functioned throughout the war and is still one of the largest and best equipped reëducational centers in the country. In the spring of 1915, a similar center was established by the Government at Saint-Maurice, near Paris — the *Institut National des Invalides de la Guerre*, formerly the National Home for Convalescents and the National Asylum for victims of industrial accidents. Among the early and influential groups which took up the question of reëducation was the *Federation Nationale d'Assistance aux Mutilés des Armées de Terre et de Mer*, the president of which was M. Maurice Barrès, who through his book, "*Pour les Mutilés*," created a strong public sentiment for the reëducation of the crippled soldier. Many schools were developed along these same lines through the Ministries of Agriculture, of Commerce, and of the Interior, by public committees, departmental, communal and private effort. The larger schools were established near the important centers: Paris, Bordeaux, Lyon, Marseilles, Clermont-Ferrand, etc., and smaller schools were scattered throughout eighty-two of the eighty-seven Departments of France.

Soldiers discharged from the French military service fell within one of two classes: Reformés Number 1 and 2. The term "reformé" is the equivalent to that of honorable discharge from the army, the difference between the classes being based on the origin of injuries, the first class including those whose wounds or maladies had been caused by events in active military service and the second, those whose wounds or maladies were not considered to have been received in active service, such as the sufferers from tuberculosis for instance. Reformé Number 1 had a legal right to a pension while Number 2 had no

claim. The French War Office established a National Placement Service in Paris where any disabled soldier could apply for work. Here he was examined and his physical capabilities for any specially suggested employment were studied. The nature of his disability, general health and aptitude for work were noted. Finally his subsequent movements were carefully observed until he was settled in the occupation chosen for him.

Considering the vast amount of work to be done for the mutilés, the welcome which the coöperation and help of the American Red Cross received when it organized its Bureau for the Reëducation of Mutilés in July, 1917, is easily understood. From the first it was the policy of the Bureau to lend its support through the existing French organizations whenever possible, in recognition of the fact that those in need of help could best be cared for through or by their own people. Close coöperation was maintained between the American Red Cross and sixty-nine French groups concerned with disabled soldiers, as well as with the military and civil departments of the French government.

While the disabled soldier of France had by no means been left uncared for there was little effort toward co-ordination and standardization of organized reëducational work, and the problem was further complicated by the steadily increasing numbers of the mutilés, the lack of artificial limbs and other appliances, and of schools.

Investigation proved that seventy-five per cent. of the mutilés were farmers, many of whom needed only the proper substitute for a limb to be enabled to resume their regular work, or who could be retrained in some other branch of farm industry that would enable them to earn their living on and from the land. The number of agricultural professions that can be adapted for war cripples are many: overseer, game keeper, caretaker, gardener, driver of agricultural machines, vine-grower, nurseryman, seedsman, tree cultivator, grazier, cow-herder, dairy employee, butter and cheese maker, steeper and stripper of

flax and hemp, cider-maker, chicken raising, sheep, hog and rabbit breeding, fish and bee culture and silkworm culture.

In view of the percentage of mutilés who had formerly been farmers, the number of agricultural pursuits open to them, and the fact that the Ministry of Agriculture had been especially interested in making it easier for the mutilé to obtain small land holdings through loans made at special rates of interest, it seemed a wise procedure to the Red Cross to organize a farming center where the disabled soldier could obtain scientific training in farming industries. Accordingly, in February, 1918, the Red Cross started such a center at Le Courbat near Tours where training in the following courses was given: live stock farming, dairy work, market gardening, horticulture, tractor operating and repairing.

Six barracks were erected (three of which were provided by the French government) and equipped as dormitories, class and recreation rooms, dining-hall and kitchen, bath, and infirmary of four beds. A trained American social worker was put in charge of the school and recreation barracks and the little canteen where the men were sold chocolate, postcards, soap, shoe-laces, and a limited quantity of wine and tobacco, etc. The recreation room was made as attractive as possible with gay curtains, posters and flowers, and a phonograph and games were provided. The men proved very responsive and for the most part made good progress in their work though some suffered greatly from their mutilations and found it hard to conquer their mental depression.

The Red Cross trained at this farm several Serbian mutilés as tractor conductors who on the completion of their course were sent to Serbia to prepare the land for the civilian population. After their graduation an appeal was received from their Government asking that more mutilés be accepted at the Red Cross farm and in consequence a total of twenty-seven disabled Serbians were

received and trained there. A few French mutilés were also trained in this course, which, since it did not require the average period of from six to eight months' instruction, was the only one that was completed when the school was closed in November. All mutilés in the other sections were individually provided for by the Red Cross at the time of closing. Some took positions at once in preference to entering another school to complete their course under different conditions and others were transferred to schools of their own selection. One man was helped to establish a poultry business on a small farm which he was able to rent.

When it became known that the Red Cross intended to discontinue the farm in January, 1919 — in accordance with its general policy of winding up the work wherever possible — General Malleterre, President of the *Association Générale des Mutilés de la Guerre*, endeavored to take it over on behalf of the French, and to continue its training courses without break. He obtained the coöperation of the National Office for Mutilés and Reformés of the war, which body represented the French government, and also a contribution from the Government of Cuba, but unfortunately the proprietor would not come to an agreement concerning the sale of the property and the American Red Cross dismantled the institution. All machinery was sold at the same price which had been paid for it while the live stock was disposed of to advantage. The dormitory equipment was given to the French government for a re-educational school to be opened at Lille and the three barracks owned by the Red Cross were transferred to the United States Army.

The situation in regard to artificial limbs when the Red Cross came to France was a serious one. The responsibility of manufacturing these articles had been assumed by the Government, which had its own factory and had also placed some contracts with private firms.

In addition the American Clearing House had, since 1915, contributed a certain number of limbs of American manufacture, but the supply furnished from all these sources by no means met the demand.

Thousands of soldiers who had suffered amputation of an arm or a leg were leaving the hospitals either with empty sleeves or on crutches, practically incapacitated as wage earners. It was not only a question of furnishing these men with proper artificial appliances, but the cost was an item of great importance to the French government. The advantages of the light willow American limbs over the heavy and cumbersome steel and leather French articles had already become apparent, but because of the radically different processes involved they were not being made in France to any great extent. There was need not only of more limbs but of better ones such as the Clearing House had contributed in comparatively small numbers, and when it was absorbed by the Red Cross its work along these lines was continued by the latter organization upon a larger scale.

At first the aims of the Red Cross were to assist only the mutilés of the Paris district, but this work did not seem sufficiently broad in its scope and eventually a change of plan was instituted. The disabled soldiers who came to the organization for aid often had artificial limbs which the French government had furnished them and with which they were dissatisfied. The demand for something less awkward and more practical for all classes of soldiers who had suffered amputations seemed so imperative that the Red Cross resolved to give the matter special study.

In coöperation with the French *Service de Santé*, which provided the buildings, a workshop was opened at Saint Maurice near Paris. A certain type of artificial limb was selected for manufacture while a corps of workers were gathered together which it was hoped would be able to evolve apparatus that would suit the immediate needs of



the situation more fully than anything yet on the market, the matter of cost having to be considered as well as practicability.

The corps included medical men as well as expert artisans. Their collection of apparatus for mutilés, gathered from all sources, became the best in France and there was no side of the problem to which they did not give careful attention. The United States Army, France and various governments and societies were glad to avail themselves of the opportunity to study their exhibit. The workshop had an annex in Paris in the form of a clinic where individual mutilés were examined and studies made of the different cases with a view to ascertaining the desirability of certain types of amputations from the point of view of their relation to artificial limbs. Previous experience had proved that a limb was often fitted to a stump before the latter had finished shrinking — become “ripe” as it was called. All these important points were worked upon by the Red Cross Corps and the results put at the disposal of the United States Army.

The United States Army reached the decision that it was essential that artificial limbs, particularly legs, intended for our own men, should be provisional and an arrangement was made with the Red Cross whereby it agreed to furnish these. Its investigations along this new line resulted in several useful pieces of apparatus, the best of which was the “Wilson type” of leg, which was in the form of a plaster cast supported by a light frame upon which the man walked. This was in May, 1918, and from that date on the Red Cross continued to supply the various army orthopedic hospitals with this type. It also made a number of arms, special shoes and braces, and an ingenious adjustable crutch that was designed to prevent crutch paralysis.

The experiments and work of the Red Cross attracted the attention of the Greek government which in December, 1918, asked the organization if it could be possible for it



to give the Greek mutilés some assistance along these lines. The Red Cross replied that it would be glad to do what it could and agreed to set up a limb-shop in Athens, furnishing the personnel and a certain amount of partially finished material. The shop, as it was finally equipped and stocked, was capable of turning out a good number of artificial legs per month.

Undoubtedly severe facial disfigurement is the most tragic form of mutilation. For various reasons it cuts the mutilé off from social and business life. The victim is excessively sensitive about his appearance. In the end it preys upon the mind and he hides himself from the sight of others as if there were a price upon his head. Frequently these poor fellows would not return to their homes after leaving the hospitals. One who came to the Red Cross studio had refused to meet his family since he had received his wound, two and a half years before. He had a morbid dread of being seen by them in his terrible condition; of his whole face one might have said there was nothing left but one eye. Twenty operations had failed to make him look like a human being again.

At the Red Cross studio a facial mask with a mustache was made for him that covered the fearful wounds. The soldier was almost overcome by his emotion when he realized that he was no longer repulsive to look at. His despondency left him and the desire to return immediately to his family became irresistible.

The term "mask" does not do justice to the delicate, scientific and artistic appliances with which the Red Cross studio supplied many of the badly disfigured mutilés. A somewhat similar work which had been started in London for English soldiers furnished the model for the skilled Red Cross corps — some of them famous in the world of sculpture — whose atelier was established in the Latin Quarter.

Trench warfare, in which a man's head was, generally



#### HUMAN REPAIR

These are specimens of the before (above) and after (below) of some of the physiognomies of French soldiers terribly mutilated by wounds, but through the efforts of Mrs. Ladd supplied with face masks which enabled them once more to face the world without flinching.



speaking, the most exposed part of his anatomy, had left a sad crop of several thousand facially wounded soldiers in France. Some of these were beyond surgical repair, their jaws and noses completely shot away or the bones of the face hopelessly shattered. The loss of an arm or a leg did not prevent the victim from mingling with the world. With a crutch, a cane, or a peg-leg he could get about and frequently he was able to work. He was a pathetic but not a hideous object, but the other, the man with the face so wrecked that he did not look like a man at all, knew that though people would pity him they would also prefer not to be with him. It was this knowledge that, as already has been said, drove the poor wretches into solitary retreats where they preferred to undergo slow starvation rather than exhibit their horrid disfigurements. It was to assist in the much needed rescue of these mutilés, for whom no special provision had been made, that the Red Cross decided to establish the little studio in the Latin Quarter.

Some of the masks made there were intended to be used only temporarily, so that a certain number of mutilés whose features could be ultimately restored by surgery could in the meanwhile go about their normal life. They were much more comfortable and sanitary than the heavy bandages with which the faces of these men would otherwise have been swathed, as their construction permitted proper ventilation and they could easily be washed daily.

In the making of a mask a cast was first taken of the mutilé's face and on this a new face was built up in plastiline, the modeler using as a guide, photographs of the man before he was injured, and following hints from the mutilé himself. When the new face was finished and approved by the patient it was placed in a bath where it received a galvano plastic deposit of copper whose thickness did not exceed that of a visiting card. This metal mask was durable and rigid but very light. A coating of silver inside eliminated all possibility of irritation to the

skin. Eyelashes were made of fine copper threads soldered on and a mustache was added if the patient wished. When the mutilation included the entire mouth the lips of the mask were slightly parted to enable the wearer to smoke a cigarette. Finally it was so skillfully painted that it merged perfectly with the living flesh. As the masks varied a good deal in shape and size the methods of attaching them had to be worked out according to the requirements of the individual cases.

With these masks the facially wounded soldier could retake his place in the social and economical life of his community. "I have found a position now," said one. "I am no longer a pariah and can work unnoticed, thanks to my mask." Another who had lost the whole of his lower jaw had given up his position as bank clerk and freed his fiancée from her promise to marry him, saying that: "She has the right to feel afraid of such a man." Death seemed to be the only form of relief that this soldier could hope for when chance brought him to the attention of the Red Cross. A few months later his prospects had entirely changed and he wrote to the directress of the studio that his courage had returned, that he was going back to his work and expected to be married in the spring now that his fiancée could look at him again: "I can have a home of my own like other people."

A later but very important feature of Red Cross work for the benefit of the mutilés was its reëducational campaign which began in March, 1918. It had become obvious to every one interested in the matter that those who most needed to be retrained in order to be able to earn a living were frequently not making any effort to secure the necessary assistance. This was due to several reasons. The great importance of such training was not always realized or the methods by which it could be secured. Moreover many of the most severely wounded took the attitude that, since they had become cripples while



fighting for their country, it was up to the country to take care of them for the future. The Government had fostered and spread this feeling by announcing that certain minor positions at its disposal would be granted to the cripples of war. In consequence there were a great many more mutilés awaiting these jobs than there were jobs. The majority of the disabled soldiers, however, were not concerning themselves about the matter of reëducation simply because they had other and more pleasant things to think about. After a long period of service in the army, sometimes extending over four years with a painful stay at a hospital in addition, these men were sick of army life and discipline and discomfort, and their one idea was to get back to their homes and families. They had had enough of work. Rest and coddling and the companionship of those they loved were the things they hungered for.

This was of course a dangerous state of affairs. It was necessary to wake these men up to the necessity of earning their daily bread. It would do them small good to shirk their responsibilities for the ease and comfort of their hearths if there was nothing coming in to keep the fires burning there. Left to themselves these men might easily become paupers and bring ruin upon their families.

The French *Service de Santé* agreed with the Red Cross as to the great usefulness of a campaign that would spread the propaganda of reëducation among all the scattered mutilés. The methods by which the Red Cross proposed to diffuse this information were through lectures, moving pictures and placards. Cities and towns where hospitals for mutilés were located were the special objects of the campaigners and other points, if not visited directly, were reached by interesting and informing posters distributed through the *Service de Santé*. The personnel, equipment, and all expenses of these activities were provided by the Red Cross.

It was definitely shown that these campaigns accom-



plished at least three good results. First—The number of mutilés entering reëducational schools increased. Second—Local schools were stimulated to raise their standards of work and to appeal for Government subsidies in order to extend their activities. Third—Departmental committees for mutilés became more interested in the welfare of the disabled soldiers in their regions. The interest in the lectures and films was keen and cumulative. The French, though not used to this method of spreading information among the public, seemed specially to appreciate its directness. "If important questions could be presented to us in the way you do it in America," said an intelligent observer, "we should make more progress here in France."

In July, 1918, the Red Cross created a training course in practical electricity at the national professional institute for wounded soldiers at Saint-Maurice. The electrical industry was selected by reason of the varied employments it offered which could be successfully performed by physically handicapped men. For those who had been electricians before the war and had become crippled a sound theoretical training promised to put them in the way of becoming foremen and supervisors. For others a practical knowledge of wiring, installation, and repairing would ensure good positions in electrical workshops or in the many branches of industry which did not require heavy work. The National Institute was specially chosen by the Red Cross as the best school in which to establish this new course for the reason that it was a permanently endowed institution which would continue to function after the war.

Aid was given in other directions, to the National School for watchmaking at Cluses, the *Pension* for Russian mutilés at Paris, a ward and workshop added to the hospital for reformés at Neuilly, and contributions to many individuals. In August, 1918, the Red Cross coöperated with the Serbian government in establishing workshops for the retraining and education of the Serbian mutilés at the

Depot-Hospital at Francheville. The need of this particular activity arose out of a situation so unusual and pathetic that it deserves a somewhat detailed description.

When the Austrians attacked Serbia in August, 1914, they were at first successful, but the Serbian army, small as it was, soon drove the invaders from the country. Austria saw she had a bigger piece of work on her hands than she had expected and made ready with care for a new and more formidable assault. This broke in November. The Serbians, short of guns and ammunition, were forced back, fighting bravely. Belgrade fell. The outlook was black when France sent the supplies that Serbia lacked and put fresh power into her arm. Immediately she took the offensive and swept Austria out of Belgrade and back to her own borders, capturing sixty thousand prisoners. It was one of the greatest defeats administered to the Central Powers by any of the Allies during the war.

Serbia's loss in killed and wounded was heavy, but not so great as the loss she was about to suffer from disease. In December typhus appeared, first in the army and then among the civil population which, undernourished and inadequately clothed, offered favorable conditions for its rapid spread. To add to the gravity of the situation there were only a few hundred doctors in the entire country.

When these facts became known medical units were sent to her aid from America and the Allied powers, and the splendid work of these foreign doctors and nurses checked the disease in many quarters; but nevertheless one hundred and thirty-five thousand people died of it during the six months that it raged.

During the rest of the summer of 1915, Serbia was given a few months of comparative quiet, but a storm was brewing which was soon to bring destruction upon her. While the Allies were negotiating more or less hopefully with Bulgaria the Serbs saw plainly that as soon as her

mobilization was complete her intention was actively to join the Central Powers in the field. If England and France had realized this in time much might have been accomplished, but Serbia alone foresaw Bulgaria's real plans and it was on her that the blow fell.

In the fall of 1915 the mask was thrown off and Germany, Austria and Bulgaria united their forces for a combined attack upon Serbia. The enemy came down upon her from three sides at the same time. The only hope for Serbia was in prompt assistance from the Allies. In the meanwhile her army met the enemy and for several weeks made them pay dear for every inch of ground taken. Belgrade was again captured. The hope of aid from England and France vanished and the Serbian troops, seeing nothing but annihilation before them but refusing to surrender, began a general retreat.

When this happened the whole nation became panic-stricken — with good reason — and imitated the action of its army. All Serbia was at once in motion, fleeing from the invaders by three principal routes. The first led through Macedonia to Greece or to the southern coast of Albania. The second twisted and doubled across a difficult country, where many died of starvation and fatigue, ascended snow-clad mountains, and ended at last in Albania. The third, a shorter but more dangerous route, reached the same country by way of the Valley of the Drin Blanche.

The order had been given that all boys from fourteen to eighteen must join the army which was to be reorganized at the end of the retreat. Convoys of these boys accordingly set out on foot for the meeting place, the sea coast of Albania, and with them went many younger brothers, children of ten or twelve years of age. There were thirty-five thousand boys in these convoys and only fourteen thousand crossed the frontier, ten thousand of whom succeeded in reaching the coast. What is remarkable is that so many withstood the hardships and privations of that

terrible winter journey. Ten thousand emaciated young specters came staggering down to the sea in scattered groups to wait for transportation to Corfu and the Island of Vido, now known as the "Island of the Dead," for when they at last crossed to Vido it was only to die there at the rate of one hundred a day. One thousand died on the short passage over. Others never lived to see the ships. Of all that heroic band of children only five thousand were alive in 1918.

As soon as they were able to travel the French government offered to take charge of the care and education of all the refugee children, saying to Serbia: "Send us your youth."

Serbian children came to France and Corsica and many young soldiers, some of whom were mutilés and all of whom were refugees, also came until about twenty thousand persons had migrated to France and its near by colonies, which treated them with a sympathetic understanding and warm kindliness that will not be forgotten. The French would have been delighted to do more for these guests than they were able to do, but the swiftly mounting cost of the war and the increasing difficulty of meeting its host of insatiable demands left too little time or money to be devoted to other needs. It was in such situations as this that the American Red Cross could use its powers of assistance to the best advantage and it was therefore perfectly natural that it should offer to share in the support of the young Serbians, who had suffered more than any other people at the hands of the common enemy.

The fact that the French schools were congested, that few of the Serbs had any knowledge of the language and that they could progress much more rapidly with instructors of their own nationality, induced the Red Cross, urged thereto by the Serbian commanding officer at Francheville, to make them a gift of two barracks and a grant of thirty-five thousand francs to equip five workshops. To supplement this arrangement the Serbian government

added a revolving fund of fifteen thousand francs to be devoted to purchasing material and paying salaries. The trades taught at the workshops were tailoring, shoe-making, harness-making, and carpentry.

There had been a distressing lack at Francheville of warm clothing suitable for the wounded and convalescent men, and one of the first results of the Red Cross aid was seen in the welcome activities of the tailor's shop. This and the shoemaker's shop provided articles of which the Serbs themselves were actually in need; but it was really the work itself that the inmates of the Depot sought.

Homesickness, ill health, and somber memories of the past unrelieved by any hopes for the future had brought the morale of these Serbians very low. A Red Cross representative describes the picture they made as they stood idly about on a bright June day whose sunshine failed to cheer them. "Some were war cripples, many were obviously tubercular, several were strangely dwarfed little creatures about four feet high. These last were prisoners of war from Austria, with legs amputated, some above, some below the knee (and the regularity of these dual amputations made one pause and think). They were raised on iron supports, and there was something inexpressibly sad about these wrecks of humanity, these victims of uncontrolled circumstances, who found themselves in a foreign land mutilated and deprived of all that makes life worth living. There were men listless and apathetic, or moody and sullen, or with a terrible stricken look in their faces which is hard to get out of one's mind. With homes and country in the hands of the enemy, they were exiles in a land where the language was not the least of many difficulties to contend with, and where it must be remembered, the people themselves had known invasion and were finding it more and more difficult to show hospitality to the stranger within their gates. The war seemed likely to go on for some time to come, and the hearts of the Serbs were heavy within them."



“Do you wonder that these men are melancholy?” asked the Director, pointing to the dark-clad, mournful figures. “Of their women and children they have no news, some for six years, for this war is but a continuation of our last so far as we are concerned. But we must remain a Nation, all these scattered units must somehow be reunited; it is a part of our creed and without it we are lost!”

So on the hill-top at Francheville pathetic attempts were made to keep up the old spirit of independence and patriotism. Every Sunday the Serb cripples from the French schools at Lyon would foregather with their comrades at the Depot to talk of their beloved little country across the sea, of their homes and children, and on Fête Days, the Serb laborers from the neighboring farms would gather in the château and sing the national songs and dance *kolos* and drink to the future of a restored Serbia.

From the moment they learned that the Red Cross would establish workshops at Francheville to be run by the Serbs themselves the morale began to improve. What it meant to them to feel that America was moved to help them is shown by the following letter from one of the *mutilés* of the Depot-Hospital.

“Before leaving this school to return to our own country, so well-beloved, so devastated by the enemy, and whose liberation we have awaited so long, I beg you to allow me to express to you in the names of all the Serb *mutilés* who have received instruction in this school, our gratitude and appreciation for the generosity and devotion which you have unfailingly shown us.

“We had great admiration for the American Red Cross before entering the school, knowing well how the United States battle for right and humanity, and how they have come to the assistance of every one who has suffered from this abominable war, but we have found in this school that,



thanks to your personal devotion, we have lived as in our own families.

“I know that the noble people of the United States of America will continue to help our country, so devastated by this horrible war, until it is reëstablished, and we shall always be happy to have followed the courses in this school under your direction, hoping that you will not forget us and hoping to show you that after we arrive in our own country we will follow the better methods shown to us.

“In finishing our letter of appreciation, may I be permitted to cry, ‘*Vive* the noble people of the United States! — *Vive* the American Red Cross!’ In the name of all my Serbian Comrades,

“YANKOVITCH KOSTA.”

A definite agreement was made between the American Red Cross and the Serbian authorities that the workshops installed at Francheville should be later on transferred to Belgrade, there to form the nucleus of a Serb National School of Reëducation for War Cripples, and that the technical director of the school, who was an official in the Ministry of Public Works, should continue, at least for such time as might be considered necessary, to superintend the working of the school after its transference to Belgrade.

## CHAPTER VII

### REFUGEES

**I**N the majority of all previous wars the invading armies have pierced the country of their opponents on a somewhat narrow path of destruction and the civil population, while suffering a certain displacement, usually soon returned to take up their existence in what remained of their homes. The invasion of Belgium and the north of France was more like the rolling of a broad tidal wave over the land. More than one tenth of the area of France, comprising eight of her most densely populated and well-to-do Departments, was overrun and devastated or held by the forces of the Germans.

This extensive area was rich in beet-sugar and dairy-farms, though perhaps not so renowned for the latter as Normandy or Brittany, but it is here that the greatest coal and iron fields of France lay. The wealth of the Departments was chiefly derived from their numerous mines, their foundries and their textile factories. Owing to the kind of labor there was probably a more diversified population here than anywhere else in the country, but even so it was, from an American point of view, a stable and homogeneous population. The inhabitant of the North of France is one of the sturdiest of European types. Descended from the old Flemish weavers he is honest, industrious and intelligent, with keen business powers. Consequently the majority of the people are well-to-do and abject poverty is very rare. The Gallic instincts of thrift and devotion to their "foyers" are highly developed in them. How tenaciously they clung to their homes is shown by the fact that the

early reports of enemy atrocities in Belgium failed to stir them.

When the German armies had passed over Belgium and were actually advancing into Northern France itself, some of the inhabitants fled, but many remained, partly because of their obstinate attachment to the soil and partly from a belief that in spite of terrible rumors the enemy would not be so cruel as wantonly to injure or kill defenseless civilians. They had not yet learned what war, as waged by the Germans, meant. The swiftly moving armies of the enemy came on and engulfed them. The able-bodied among those who had remained were held to labor for their captors and those who were not strong enough to be of any service died off or were ultimately returned to the uninhabited part of France.

The French refugees may be broadly classed in the following three divisions according to the manner and time of their exodus, though the needs of all were about the same and the manner of meeting them closely parallel: the refugees pure and simple, the repatriés, and the évacués.

Of the first class, those who had the most to lose made an immediate rush upon the banks for their savings, and with what personal effects they could take with them, started south in trains, in automobiles, and in wagons. Most of them came from the centers of population and could pay to get quickly away to some point of safety where they were able to convert their holdings into cash and to reestablish themselves; but for the poorer people and those far from the lines of communication it was a different story. During those last days in Belgium, at Mons and Charleroi, at Maubeuge and Le Lateau, the thin lines of the French and British troops retreated rapidly before the weight of the German thrusts. For days and nights there was hardly an hour during which they could stop for rest. Remembering this, one can see how small the chances of getting away were for the mass of the inhabitants, dazed by the suddenness of the invasion and

almost wholly without proper means of transportation.

In August and September of 1914 the roads of Northern France were filled with long lines of people, one composed of groups of refugees fleeing from the Germans, the other, the soldiers of France, marching to meet the enemy. These were the first of the refugees that for four years steadily streamed back away from the War Zone. A precise count of their number has probably never been made, but during the two months mentioned about one and a quarter to one and a half million souls were forced to leave their homes. Added to the responsibility of launching a great army into a defensive fight at the very door of its capital the French Government had to undertake the suddenly imposed and costly burden of caring for this multitude, and the work had to be done quickly and with decision. Huge appropriations had to be made for instant relief, for food, shelter, and transport for the refugees en route; for finding tenement buildings to relieve the inevitable congestion of Paris, where the daily arrivals sometimes totaled six thousand; for securing billeting places in the rural districts of France, and for the whole control of these bewildered, suffering masses.

That it was well done is shown from the number of families that were saved from going under. It was not all done by the Government, however. In those early days nearly every one in France was willing to share a corner of his home with one who had borne the heavy shock of war. Individuals contributed food and household belongings. All gave what they could to aid the refugees till some sort of labor could be provided for them. Societies for relief work began to spring up in all the large centers, with workers in the smaller places around them; but these were not generally endowed with official powers or functions by the Government, and, as a rule, lacked the advantage of extensive coördination, so that in some cases the beneficiaries received too little help and in others more than their fair proportion.

When the refugees were fitted into an appropriate environment the situation was as favorable as possible, but often miners' families and factory workers, who neither knew nor cared anything about farming, found themselves placed in the country. As nearly all the mining regions were in the North and were then in the enemy's hands, the displaced miners naturally looked for the only employment they were fitted for, which was to be found in places like St. Étienne and Moulins. Here large furnaces and munition factories offered constantly ascending wages to men and women as well. But there were certain economical and social dangers in the situation. Evidently there had to be sufficiently large centers of munition-production to insure concentration and uniformity of output; but the Government had to be careful also not to allow these centers to grow too large by reason of refugee labor for the social good of the communities. As long as railroad travel was strictly regulated (and the French Government during the war made every effort to do this) it was possible to keep down somewhat the rush of population to the cities. Sanitary and social standards are always largely dependent upon the density of population and housing conditions of a community, and these conditions during the war were contingent upon the labor market. Labor and building materials all through the war were extremely scarce so that few old or unfinished tenements could either be repaired or completed to supply the necessary quarters for the great access of the refugees which the Government had undertaken to house at nominal or free rent.

On the other side, many of the inhabitants of the agricultural sections were sent to the cities, where they could find no work to which they were accustomed; moreover, being used to life out-of-doors, the confinement and lack of exercise told heavily upon them. Such confusion, while it was unavoidable, led to restlessness and dissatisfaction as well as to positive hardships.



In 1916 another class of refugees, the so-called repatriés, began to flow back into free France. These were people who had been living behind the German lines and who were finally sent away because their maintenance was becoming a burden to the invaders. Clinging to their homes with passionate devotion they had been caught by the German advance, and those who were able to work had been practically the slaves of their oppressors. After long months of toil and suffering those who had broken under the strain, together with the useless little children, were herded into convoy trains and sent back to France by way of Switzerland. There was no pity in this act of the enemy, in whose eyes there apparently existed only two classes of human beings, those who were economically fit for his purposes and those who were unfit.

“Make them work to the limit and pay for every mouthful they eat.” That was German logic. Sex was immaterial, or age — women over seventy were not exempted — so long as there was a sufficient amount of physical strength. The captured inhabitants were set at trench digging and all manner of menial and heavy labor. In time many of these began to give out and there had always been a residue of weak and aged. The Germans found these “incumbrances” getting on their nerves. They hated to see any one idle, particularly any prisoner, and eventually the order came from headquarters to get rid of these unfortunates whom they had robbed of everything, including health.

“The good-for-nothings eat up the bread.” “The brats drink up the milk we might have.” Such were the German reasonings, and with their usual stern efficiency they acted upon the decision at once.

The number of this class of refugees is more exactly known than those of the former class as they arrived by trains at a given point and could thus be counted. There were about three hundred and fifty thousand of them in all. They had begun to come back early in the year 1916, but in



the spring and summer of 1917 their number had been greatly augmented, so that when the American Red Cross became organized in France about one thousand repatriés were arriving every day at the little town of Evian, where the Mayor, always in evening clothes no matter what the hour, gave them an official as well as affectionate welcome. Some of the travelers found relatives waiting to take care of them, or money to defray their expenses for a time. Those who had neither friends nor resources were sent in convoy trains to be billeted in Departments by the Ministry of the Interior.

In December, 1917, the Bureau of Civil Affairs of the American Red Cross received from the Minister of the Interior an urgent request for aid in relieving the distress of the great and increasing number of refugees coming over the Swiss border. The following is an extract from his letter: ". . . Will you permit me to ask you to look into the possibility of a new kind of collaboration, possibly more useful than the present? . . . The question of the refugees raises several problems of different orders. . . . At the present moment I am especially concerned with the reception in the Departments of the trains which bring the repatriates from the Swiss frontier.

"There arrive at Evian each week between seven thousand and seven thousand two hundred repatriates and, deducting those who are able to rejoin their families, resident in free France, or who are hospitalized, there are each week six trains of six hundred places each which convoy the repatriates to the Departments where a shelter is increasingly difficult to find and it is in this that your delegates could be useful in seconding the efforts of my prefects. I should be much obliged to you for letting me know whether you believe that you can enter into this plan, and also for giving me particulars as to the kind of aid which your delegates could furnish my prefects."

In accepting the plan the Red Cross replied as follows: "In general, I may say that it would be our idea to give

assistance by supplying furniture, by completing unfurnished buildings if that were found to be necessary, and if it can be done at moderate expense, by providing tools, seeds and other means of self-support where these would be useful or by any other means that would hasten the process of making the condition of the repatriates as nearly normal as possible. This, however, is only a very general statement of our understanding as to the part which we can wisely take, and our minds are entirely open to any counsel you may have to give us."

The Red Cross, which had already been helping to relieve the refugee situation in Paris and at other places, expanded its activities along these lines to meet the increasing needs, but as the above letter shows it laid down no positive lines of action, allowing its operating plans to remain more or less elastic. It may be said, however, that the letter gives a good idea of the sort of aid furnished in general by the Red Cross to all classes of refugees.

Red Cross delegates were sent to Evian and to those Departments where the convoys were expected. Two trains a day were then bringing into the little town on Lake Geneva a throng of repatriés, whose mental as well as physical condition was very bad indeed, for the shameful humiliations put upon them by the Germans had had as much effect as the bodily hardships which they had endured. One curious feature that shows the methodical habit of the German mind was the segregation of the travelers into car-load groups, the old in one division, the young in another, and the tubercular and insane, each in their separate compartments. Many were too weak or ill to walk and these were conveyed by the Red Cross ambulances to the Casino, the place chosen for the reception and feeding of the repatriés, or to the hospitals, one of which was established by the Red Cross, for an examination by our physicians.

These precautions were highly essential. To one sick

child who had slipped through Evian before thorough medical examination had been established two hundred cases of diphtheria and nine deaths in a distant part of France had been traced. Some of them had brought into France a certain form of typhoid — it made its first appearance at Lille — until that time unknown in the country and later it was observed at Evian. There was of course much tuberculosis and several kinds of skin disorders. The filthy, undernourished children were simply covered with the itch and alive with lice and fleas, those active carriers of disease. It is impossible to give an accurate picture of the wretched state of these poor people, hundreds of whom never reached Evian, but died en route and were buried at the first convenient stopping place. Other hundreds drew only a breath of liberty before passing away in the Evian hospitals.

That in some towns, the Germans allowed American provisions the right of entry was due to the fact that they found it cheaper to let others feed these half-starved creatures. Biscuits that were supposed to contain the elements of a well-balanced ration were distributed in some of the towns as gifts from the United States and at ten o'clock every morning the children came eagerly to get them, and the results of this addition to their scanty diet were immediate and striking. The grateful people called this little biscuit "manna."

If the parents suffered equally with the children from lack of food it was a matter of less importance in their eyes. As for us, they said, we are old, whether we are hungry or not is of little consequence. The whole story of the sacrifices they made to provide sufficient food and adequate garments for their infants during the cold, damp winters will never be told.

Finally gifts of cloth began to come from America. Many of the people were almost naked by that time and their sufferings were great, especially among the old and feeble whose blood did not run warmly. The American

cloth and the little caps and other articles of clothing were welcomed with thanksgivings. As one woman sat before her window making a dress of this new cloth — the rags she had on she had worn for two years without change — she could see the Germans removing the contents of a factory across the way, throwing bolts of cloth out of the windows; cashmeres, flannels and serges; till camion after camion was piled high; spoils of war which they had jealously guarded and were at length shipping away to the warehouses of Germany. And in describing her feelings at the time she has told of her thoughts: "For all that it has done for us, may God bless America." What American who loves his country will not be proud of having helped to evoke the gratitude expressed in such simple prayers.

The refugee situation was, in its character, something like a fever. It had its steadily draining effect upon the country always, but at times it rose to a kind of crisis such as that just described at Evian and during the various extensive German or Allied offensives. In the latter, while new territory was not always ravished, villages that had early known the vicissitudes of war but had for varying periods thereafter been left in comparative peace, found themselves again within the actual storm of battle. Frequently some of the inhabitants had crept back to these villages to pick up the broken threads of their existence and all such became refugees once more, or if they were ordered to leave by the French military authorities, as was generally the case, they were classed as *evacués*. There was perhaps small difference between the one and the other, though the *evacués*, since they usually received warning beforehand, were able to retreat with most of their possessions.

Early in its career in France, in July, 1917, to be exact, the Red Cross had organized a Refugee Bureau which soon embarked upon a scheme of energetic relief, dispatch-

ing delegates to those points where the refugees had congregated, erecting canteens to feed them en route — for the streams of refugees were still flowing — and establishing dispensaries, clinics and *vestiaires*, or storehouses where they could obtain clothing. All these numerous activities were carried out with the coöperation of French relief societies, and in many cases Red Cross aid took the sole form of money contributions to those societies which had done, and were continuing to do, magnificent work. But one must not overlook the fact that the cost of all this relief work had been mounting to huge proportions. The highest figures ever reached by Red Cross refugee appropriations for one month were one million four hundred thousand dollars, whereas in 1917, the French Government was spending a monthly average of fourteen million dollars for the same work and at a time when her military needs were drawing ravenously upon the resources of the country. If the aid given by the Red Cross had been multiplied by twenty there would still have been much left to do.

Paris, the Mecca for all things French and for all classes of society, was naturally the point toward which the majority of the refugees turned early in the war. They expected to find there the aid and the security they needed, but after a time the care of these thousands became a grave municipal problem, owing to the housing and food situation and the fact that work could not be found for all of them. The Government had already granted a daily pension of one and a half francs for each adult and one franc for each child under sixteen, and in some cases, in the centers of population, an additional allowance of five francs a month was given for rent to the head of the family; but this did not go far toward securing habitable quarters in Paris, where the cost of living was rapidly increasing.

When the Red Cross began to operate it found that the most distressful conditions were existing among the ref-



ugees in the city. Naturally they had sought the cheapest rooms obtainable and had packed themselves in as closely as possible, usually eating, sleeping and living in one room, a state of affairs not conducive to good morals or good health. As was inevitable sickness began to appear among them. To add to their troubles rents rose by leaps and bounds. By a Government Act no family, one of whose members was mobilized, could be ejected for non-payment of rent if they had been occupants before the war. This was very well so far as it went, but it did not protect the unfortunate refugees; indeed it tended to increase their distress, for in some instances the landlords tried to get from them what could not be demanded of the before-the-war renters, who were protected by the afore-said act.

The Red Cross canvassed Paris for houses that could be made into refugee tenements. Out of one hundred and fifty possible places it was decided that it would be practicable to finish or repair only sixty, which might house about nine thousand persons at the expense of forty dollars per family. The Red Cross furnished the necessary financial assistance and four French societies undertook to superintend the completion and management of the buildings. Here was one of the many situations not reached by official aid, in spite of large Government appropriations, where the comparatively small amount expended by the Red Cross made all the difference between misery and a livable existence to several thousand people.

The organization was in a delicate position. It was trying to operate in a foreign country where it had no official standing except by courtesy, and it was difficult for it to use what it characteristically considered as effective methods for the carrying out of plans without seeming disagreeably officious and self-sufficient. It was laid down as a rule, therefore, that in all refugee relief work — the rule applied to all its forms of French war relief work — the Red Cross must not give the least grounds for the

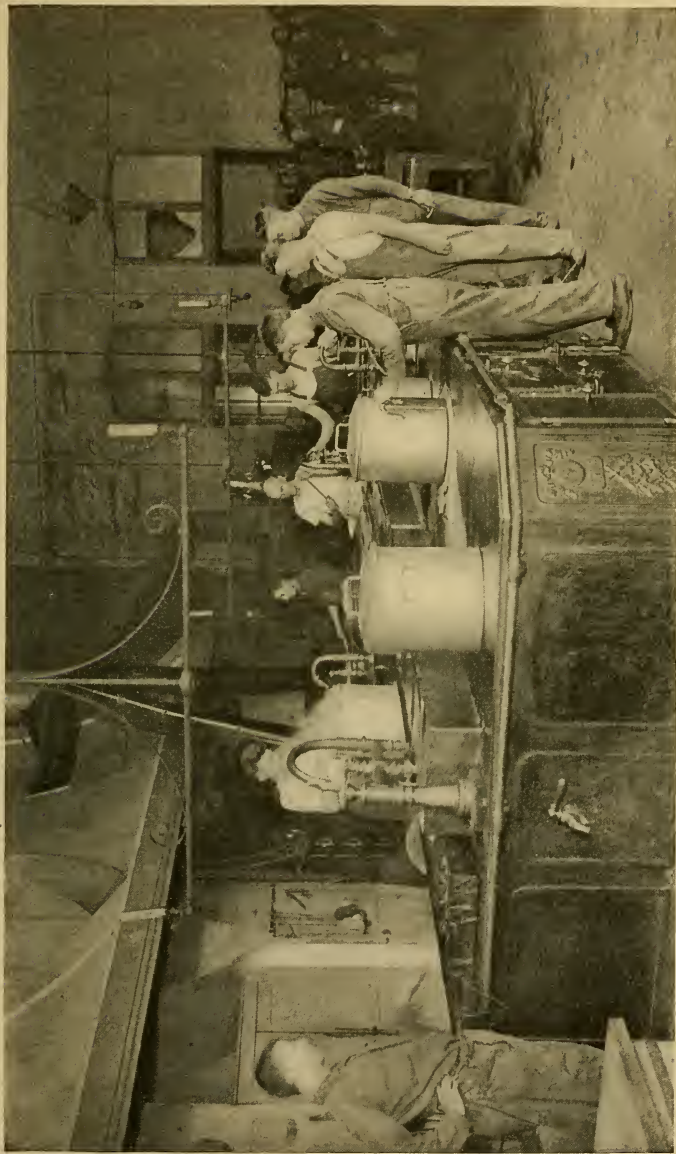


criticism that it was assuming a certain prerogative in helping to lift the burden that naturally belonged to the French authorities. Proof that it was generally successful is to be found in most of its records. As a well-known French woman, herself a captive in Northern France, remarked: "One does not need to blush in accepting the aid of the American Red Cross."

Information and coöperation was always sought from the French societies, the Red Cross seldom proceeding on its own initiative save in cases of great immediate necessity. Mistakes were sometimes made, but they usually arose from over-generosity. The organization had come to France not to keep shop or to dicker, but to show in the most practical ways possible the warmth of American sympathy and to prove that our promise to make the cause of the Allies our own had material power behind it.

At an early date the Bureau of Refugees had sent out delegates to Amiens, St. Étienne, Dijon, Chartres, Cannes, and Dinan, well distributed and representative centers for such work throughout France. Refugees in these towns were helped and arrangements made to receive others, who were coming into Paris at a rate which made a proper reception very difficult. In the summer of 1918 the rush of fugitives from the districts of the Aisne and the Marne became so great that an appeal for help was sent to the Red Cross by the Government.

The majority came through the railway station known as the *Gare du Nord*. The French had established a temporary hospital there and two canteens, one in the basement and the other in the court where the crippled and the sick, who could not go downstairs, were fed. The Bureau sent a corps of workers to assist in receiving and caring for the flood of travelers who, as usual, were in a sorry condition. Additional hospitals were installed, medical attention given, an ambulance service maintained, supplies furnished the canteens, and dispensaries started. Night after night — the convoys usually arrived at the



#### FOOD FOR HUNGRY MOUTHS

Wherever it was possible the Red Cross utilized the splendid kitchen facilities to be found in France, but which were useless without raw material, fuel and labor.



end of the day — the work went on, often from sunset to dawn and frequently complicated by the raids of the German aëroplanes upon the city. It was rather disheartening for these poor people, dazed and shaken as they were by the horrors of the War Zone they had just left, to be greeted by the wailing sirens of Paris, the crackle of shrapnel, and the heavy, rending explosions of the Boche bombs.

The villages from which these refugees of the summer of 1918 had come were those that had been taken by the Germans early in the war and from which they had been driven in March, 1917. In their retreat they had methodically and effectively carried out a sullen work of destruction, burning and blowing up houses and barns and bridges, hewing down orchards and shade trees, and carrying off or wrecking all vehicles and agricultural machines and implements. Some of their ruinous activity was probably justified by military necessity, but most of it was due to plain German spite, such as the poisoning of wells and the malicious destruction of personal property. Whatever their motive they did their work well, destroying two hundred and sixty-four villages and deporting all the able-bodied inhabitants. The German newspaper, the *Lokal Anzeiger*, confined itself to the ungarnished truth when it declared with pride that: "The land given up forms to-day a veritable desert which one might call the Kingdom of the Dead."

In the following year those inhabitants who had escaped the German drag-net gradually returned to that part of the War Zone from which the Germans had been driven, and painfully, for few of them were young or vigorous, began to patch up some kind of a shelter and try to scratch a living from the neglected soil. Lacking nearly all the essentials even of peasant life, their situation naturally attracted the immediate attention of the Red Cross which took steps to join in the work for their relief, establishing various headquarters in these devastated districts with warehouses at Arras, Ham, Noyon, and Soissons, within

range of the German cannon. A corps of field workers was sent into the valley of the Somme to aid in rendering habitable the houses and stables of the returning peasants and supplies of all kinds, food, clothing, furniture, seeds, farm implements, were sent to the warehouses where they were readily available. Other organizations, French and American, were carrying forward the same work. Its repair work upon the wrecked buildings was done by the Red Cross independently, but in all other forms of relief it extended to this section at this time, it coöperated with various organizations, such as the American Fund for French Wounded and the Society of Friends at Golan-court, Ham, and Gruny, and the Smith College Relief Unit at Grécourt, all of which acted as distributing agencies for the Red Cross gifts.

In passing it should be understood that many college units and other groups of relief workers coöperated in Red Cross activities in behalf of the civil population of France. The method of coöperation varied, but in all cases the college groups were self-supporting in so far as the maintenance of their personnel, their equipment and transportation were concerned, the Red Cross directing the work and furnishing the supplies.

The first distribution of Red Cross supplies in the Department of the Pas-de-Calais, held at the city of Arras, is thus described in a letter from a local Red Cross delegate: "The first general distribution of American Red Cross gifts was effected here on Thursday. The mayors of thirty communes were invited to attend or send a representative to Arras. They arrived from three corners of the compass (the zone between them and the firing line being unpopular as an abiding place) with every imaginable vehicle that could be pushed, pulled or propelled by man, mule or motor. At the Red Cross 'bons' were distributed bearing a list of the relief material destined for each village. From the Church of the Advent, a congregation of four hundred and twenty-seven wheelbarrows



made a very respectable exit. From the warehouses of the *Service de Reconstitution* over twelve thousand francs' worth of farming tools went forth to dig, rake, hoe, chop, sprinkle, sow, or harvest according to their various capabilities, and finally from the préfecture two hundred and twelve sacks of granulated sugar were cautiously started on their way toward several thousand palates, palates that for weeks had been very meagerly sweetened."

The Smith College Unit, whose headquarters were at Grécourt, was busy with relief and reconstruction work in a group of ruined villages in the vicinity of Nesle, to which stragglers had returned, drawn by the irresistible homing instinct of the French countryman. These people were in a most forlorn condition, depressed by the fate of relatives deported by the Germans, clothed in rags, living in improvised hovels, and often in actual need of food. The college unit fed and clothed them and supplied them with blankets and established sewing-rooms and workshops. But as the majority naturally turned to the land for their living the unit bought and distributed seeds and in every way possible entered into the plans for the planting and cultivation of the soil.

The unit had its own farm yard, stocked with rabbits and poultry (hens were very scarce) and a herd of eight cows whose milk was sold at the small price of six cents a quart.

Hand in hand with these efforts to bring life into these dead villages again was an equally determined endeavor to make their wheat fields produce, for France had long been short of grain. The French peasant sticks to old customs tenaciously and community coöperation strikes him as a dangerous surrender of his beloved individualism, but the help and sympathy given him by the relief organizations made him more open than usual to suggestions, and under their guidance he consented to join his neighbors in forming agricultural coöperative societies. Nearly one hundred of these societies had been created by March,



1918. They were tilling their fields with American tractor plows, rented them by the French Government, and sowing in them the seeds given by the American Red Cross. Flocks of sheep, furnished by the same organization, grazed in the meadows.

Among the ruins along the Somme valley the country was beginning to wear a peaceful and productive air. The French *poilus*, *en repos* in the district, had done their share in bringing the land to fresh fruitfulness, and the soldiers of the British Army were cultivating twenty thousand hectares of grain and potatoes. A year had passed since the Germans had been forced back to the Hindenburg Line. Then came the gathering rumble of the new drive, the second great German offensive, and the order was received to evacuate immediately.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE NEW OFFENSIVE

ALL that had been laboriously accomplished in the way of rendering the villages habitable and the land productive was lost and the several hundred thousand people who had been toiling there saw their growing hopes demolished in an instant. For the second time they were obliged to flee from their homes, and so impetuous was the German attack that before the inhabitants could get away the shells were falling among them. One old woman was digging in her garden when the Red Cross workers came to carry her away. She was not able to take to the road on her own feet for, according to her reckoning, she was one hundred and seven years of age; but her courage was proof against the crashing of high explosives. She had experienced war before. "I saw the great Napoleon's men march through my village," she said. She was the oldest of the evacués whom the camions of the Red Cross carried out of danger that day, as a certain pair of twins were the youngest. They had just come into the world and the first earthly sounds that greeted their infant ears were the reverberations of the contending cannon.

The Smith College Unit packed a few things into traveling bags and with its motor cars assisted the people of the town to escape, not forgetting to drive out the herd of cows, for it knew the milk would be a necessity for the babies and old people. When the evacuation had been accomplished it reported with its motor cars to the Red Cross delegate for the Somme, placing itself under his orders. Pushed along from town to town with the bands of homeless fugitives, the unit finally found itself at Beauvais.

There the refugees were lying on the floor of the station, in freight trains and sheds and in wagons, sleeping anywhere they could find a spot on which to lie. Together with some of the Friends, also fugitives from their districts, the unit began to feed the refugees. The Society of Friends took charge of the revictualing of the trains of refugees that constantly streamed through the town, supplying them with biscuits, meat, chocolates, condensed milk, etc., which they were able to distribute from the Red Cross warehouses. The Smith Unit cared for the people who remained in Beauvais, working unceasingly night and day until the trains became less and less frequent and all the refugees had left Beauvais for points further south.

The Red Cross used all the means of transportation at its disposal to help carry the people across the Somme bridges, built by American engineers, to points of safety on the further side. All along the sector the work of evacuation was furiously proceeding. Soissons was emptied on the twenty-eighth. Two thousand people from Ham were taken by the Red Cross to Nesle and, when that town became untenable, they were hurried on to Roye, where the staff of the Red Cross Children's Hospital treated many wounded soldiers that day. On the following morning the word to move on was again given and all proceeded to Amiens. On the third day of the battle the relief unit from Arras joined the hospital staff at Amiens. At Montdidier Red Cross workers from Ham, Nesle, and Grécourt were busy. Noyon was being bombarded heavily and its citizens were caught in the shell-fire. Those who were able fled like stampeded cattle. The Red Cross automobiles saved many of the old, the weak and the young. Before the fourth day of the battle dawned Montdidier and Lasigny had to be evacuated and on the fifth day fifty thousand people left the city of Amiens, whose walls were shaking under the thunder of the approaching guns.

In these and the many wild days that followed the work-

ers and the camions of the Red Cross did invaluable service. The offensive had broken sooner than was expected and it was swift and terrible beyond description. The Red Cross lost some of the stores in its warehouses but the great duty of all the relief societies in the field was to save the panic-stricken people. The Germans were always close on their heels. Shells and bombs were shrieking overhead and exploding among the towns in which the Red Cross units worked, assisting those who needed medical or other aid; hurrying them off in motor cars and returning for more; sometimes carrying loads of wounded, both civilians and soldiers. British and French troops were flowing back and mingling with the stream of refugees, saying: "The Germans are too many for us, we have got to retreat." The Red Cross canteens served more than twenty thousand soldiers a day in addition to civilians. At Beauvais, to which town the Smith College Unit had been moved, a refugee hospital was opened with Red Cross doctors and nurses, and before it was filled, the enemy planes found it out and tried to destroy it with bombs. One mother could not be moved to the cellar with the other patients and with her newly-born child and nurse stayed in the dark room during the raid. When the planes seemed to be hovering directly overhead the nurse raised the baby from its cot and held it in her arms and a moment later, with a whistling roar, a bomb fell close by. The force of the explosion shattered the windows and dashed large fragments of glass upon the baby's bed. It was a fearful period for the mothers. The air was full of death that struck everywhere, at all hours of the day and night.

During the great offensive, which continued for several weeks, the Red Cross worked day and night. Then followed a lull in the fighting due to the exhaustion of the troops on both sides; but the Allies foresaw and rapidly prepared for a resumption of the German drive.

The interim of quiet was not of long duration. On the 28th of May the offensive began again. The Préfet of

the Department of the Marne called for Red Cross aid in evacuating the inhabitants of the town of Fismes, near Rheims, and the unit at Châlons immediately responded with all the motor cars at its disposal. At five o'clock the next morning it was within sight of Fismes, only to find it in the hands of the Germans before whom the Fifth British Army was fleeing. The Red Cross cars picked up scores of people along the road and carried them to Épernay, which was for the moment safe. The unit then evacuated Geux and other small towns near by. Back and forth the cars plied, but rapidity of progress was impossible for the region abounded in steep hills and the narrow roads were packed with artillery and troops on the retreat. Blinding clouds of dust added to the confusion. Wounded soldiers were staggering from the ranks and falling on the roadside, and the Red Cross transported many of these to posts of succor in the rear.

The situation grew even more serious the next day. The Red Cross unit sent to Paris for more cars and that night five trucks with sixteen drivers left the capital and raced to Château-Thierry. Practically all the personnel of the Red Cross in that section had concentrated there and were evacuating the large town of Compiègne in the darkness. Two of the newly arrived trucks stayed to assist in this work while three went on to Épernay, where the French had a military hospital into which thousands of wounded were pouring, with only one doctor and one nurse to look after them. French and British soldiers were lying about the grounds and on the floors of the hospital wards unattended, many of them dying. No one seemed to be able to handle the situation and panic was in the air.

The Red Cross took upon itself the practical charge of the hospital. It withdrew its workers from a canteen it had established in the town and turned them into nurses who, in this crisis, administered morphine, bandaged wounds, and alleviated in every way in their power the



sufferings of the soldiers. Operations were performed by candle light, or the ray of a flash-light. The Red Cross trucks handled all of the hospital transportation. Word was sent to General Headquarters at Chaumont asking for aid, and to the Australian medical unit which was not far away. On the first of June, two medical teams from Chaumont arrived and the Australians sent a train the next day and started to evacuate the patients, for Épernay was being raided every night and the hospital was the particular mark for the German airmen who sprayed it so viciously with mitrailleuse bullets that many of the wounded died from shock.

In a few days the refugees from the district of Fismes began to reach Sens, to which, as it had been selected by the *Contrôleur des Réfugiés* as a reassembling center, a Red Cross unit was dispatched. Most of them had been turned back from Paris or Troyes, whither they had hastened in the first flush of their panic, and they arrived by train, on foot, or in vehicles of every description. They came in such numbers that the town could not furnish them with sufficient food. By means of Red Cross supplies, which were rushed to the scene in large quantities, the women of the relief society called the French *Comité des Réfugiés*, were able to serve twenty-three hundred meals a day at a portable kitchen stationed at the outskirts of the town. Here were gathered the fugitives who had toiled over the miles of road with their horses, cows and sheep, all parked in a restless, dusty herd. At the canteen of the *Fourneau Économique* other thousands were fed. Six large rest-houses had been hurriedly prepared to receive them, while arrangements were being made to divide them into the convoys, eight hundred to a thousand strong, which were being dispatched as fast as they were ready to those cities of the center and south of France indicated by the Ministry of the Interior.

One of these rest-houses was the Archbishop's palace, where every night from seven to eight hundred people were



lodged. The American Red Cross turned one of the large rooms into a temporary dispensary, supplying the blankets, sheets, beds, and medical stores, and four French Red Cross nurses cared for the large numbers that, first and last, were brought there. Most of them, particularly the children, were suffering from forms of shock and hysteria induced by the terrible experiences to which they had been subjected. Many mothers of babies only a few days old were given tender care in that old palace, and scores of aged and feeble men and women gained there new strength to support them on their way. Theirs was the hardest lot of all. Some of them had lost their sons in the war and had no relative to turn to and now they found themselves torn from homes and dependent upon charity for every necessity of life.

"We have nothing and we are nothing," said one of them. "The only proper thing for us to do is to die quickly, but even our dying will inconvenience the strangers among whom we must pass our last days."

War had not only taken from these people their children; it had stripped them of their dignity and self-respect in depriving them of a place to hide their sorrow from the public gaze. With them associations were more numerous and powerful than with the younger refugees. The constantly changing conditions of American life have not, as a rule, allowed time to form such strong attachments to the soil. If success in business warrants it the American usually moves to what he considers, for one reason or another, a more desirable location. He seldom occupies the house in which his father or his mother was born and would be filled with dismay if he were told he had to, but the great mass of the French people live in homes that have seen the birth and death of many generations of the family. They love their not over-clean or over-comfortable villages with a devotion which we can only vaguely guess at. Every square inch of ground they walk on is hallowed with associations and traditions.

On the third of June the Germans began to shell Épernay. They were then only about twelve kilometers away and it was expected that the town would fall. Sixteen girls from the Red Cross canteen were working in the hospital, and they stayed there. Épernay was not the only place where the Red Cross was showing its courage and devotion in those terrible days. There were Red Cross emergency hospitals at Montmirail and Cézannes and other towns, in charge of personnel from the Department of the Meuse, and the women of the American Fund for French Wounded were doing their share. One of them drove a car for a Red Cross unit, working over roads that were always under fire, after the regular chauffeur had been wounded by a shell.

About three weeks later there came a rumor that the United States troops had been thrown into Château-Thierry. Then followed the definite information of a gain of twenty-five kilometers by our men. The United States Army had struck its first blow under its own command.

At the time the Red Cross workers could judge of the military significance of the results only by the changes in their own situation. "The thing," as one worker at Épernay expressed it, "seemed to halt right there." The Germans stopped shelling the town. The great offensive died down. To be on the safe side the Red Cross evacuated the hospital at Épernay, moving the patients to a formation in the rear, where it took charge of them for several weeks.

One of the most interesting outstanding features of the work of the Red Cross Transportation Department, on the civilian side, was its efforts for the refugees of these spring and summer drives of 1918. There is absolutely no means of determining how many of these people were served by the American Red Cross transport system. The drivers received their orders to help and just "jumped in," not stopping to count heads. One car may have made a short

haul to a place of safety a dozen or twenty times a day, or a longer haul fewer times. The drivers worked night and day, taking pocket-luncheons and stealing cat-naps on their seats between rides.

The Red Cross transportation director said of this period: "There have been many serious refugee disasters to be met, but they all fade into insignificance compared with the situation confronting us in the months of March, April, May and June, 1918. Towards the middle of March, the German High-Command, being convinced probably of the fact that American troops were arriving in such numbers as to rapidly become a serious menace to them, decided to make a drive on Paris, with the hope that, with the capture of the French capital, a condition of chaos could be created which would serve as a mortal blow to the Allied cause on the Western front. During the first few days of the offensive over the scarred battlefields of the Somme and Aisne, the enemy took in rapid succession the towns of Noyon, Roye, Ham, Nesle, and Ribécourt and seriously threatened the important railway center at Amiens. All this territory had formerly been captured by the enemy in the previous year, and during the closing months of 1917 and early 1918 this territory had been recaptured and active preparations made to reconstruct and rehabilitate the civilian population. In one fell swoop this gradual pushing back of the enemy was wiped out, and the thousands of civilians who had drifted back to their homes were given no time whatever to get away from the advancing enemy." Happily this drive was finally held in check at Montdidier, near which several of our American divisions at Cantigny did such valiant work in April against the enemy.

Now the German High-Command looked around again for another outlet, with Paris again as the goal. This time it was southward from a line drawn between Rheims on the east to Soissons on the west, a stretch of about sixty miles, comprising all the length of the greatly contested

Chemin des Dames. In the latter part of May they surged southward for forty miles between these two points as far as Château-Thierry on the Marne, old territory from which the French army had driven them in September, 1914. Here fortunately they were again stopped, American troops playing well their part in this action. Had the Germans been able to push a very little further westward into the fastnesses of the large forest regions around Villa Cotterets, south of Soissons and around Compiègne, things would indeed have looked very bad for the Allies; for with a number of huge gun-emplacements set up there, Paris could have been laid under a continuous long-distance shell-fire sufficient to have produced such a panic in the capital as to have crippled seriously the morale of the whole French army.

It is utterly impossible to conceive the picture of misery presented by the evacuated refugees, especially when given notice that they must get out within a very few hours. In some cases they were given only half an hour in which to leave. The town of Noyon, of twenty-five thousand inhabitants, Ham, Nesle, Ribécourt, Fère-en-Tardenois, Château-Thierry, and all the villages round about, had suddenly to arise en masse and decamp. The problem before the American Red Cross Transportation Department at this time was staggering. In such an emergency every possible spare car of whatever description and every spare driver were rushed to the front, with passes and orders to pick up those who were most in need of such service, to get them to some railhead or point from which they might be advanced further into the safety zone. The story of one of the drivers comes in here well in point.

“In May, 1918, in connection with Château-Thierry I had refugee work to do and remember perfectly well the first order given me in this connection. It was to go out and bring in a smashed car which I succeeded in doing, I had a pass ready as a volunteer: had no trunk or clothes there, except what were on my back. I worked in over-

alls, and pieced them out by what I could find from time to time. It was a convoy of three trucks, under command of Captain ——. It was dark at Château-Thierry: the Boches were there. The French and English were retreating and we were giving out 'eats' (chocolate and sausages) to them as they went through, falling back to Montmirail, some twenty kilometers southeast of there.

"We were given orders to get out of Montmirail at 4 A. M. I slept in my truck a little while before starting. I pulled it up at Compiègne. They were nearly all old people that I saw. It was pitiful indeed. There was one old woman of eighty, and a daughter of sixty, also an old grandmother of past ninety. Another case was of an old man and his wife, who was older. He was very much opposed to leaving, saying that he would find a way of getting away in time. The wife cried like a baby when she found that they would have to be evacuated. I had actually to lift her by force into the camionette and compel them to come along. They had buried nearly all their wine, and gave to the chauffeur what they themselves could not carry to give to French poilus on the road. At More Église, near Compiègne and below Noyon, I was trying to find some one to be evacuated. The French soldiers were nervous: they told me to get away, as the Boches were coming. But I got all my people though big guns were firing and observation-balloons and planes were all active.

"While near Compiègne doing refugee work, the Australians had had a fight near by. An Australian plane was forced to alight on account of engine trouble. I saw it strike its nose in an adjoining field and roll over once or twice all played out. I told my refugees to get out and hide, while I steered my machine over into the field, where the two were evidently badly mixed up with their apparatus. I found them alive and was able to unsnarl them, get them into my camionette and take them to their quarters, where they got the best of help possible. After



this I returned to my refugees and got them to their destination. The front was very active at just this time when the Germans were making great efforts to break through into the big forest all around there, and the camions were always by the roadside with soldiers ready to pull out towards the front, or to retreat at any minute, or to bring provisions."

A further word as to the Transportation Department. The French Minister of the Interior, in July, 1917, sent a request to the Red Cross for aid in moving and caring for the "repatriés" arriving at Evian through Switzerland. The Transportation Department decided to undertake half this work, and ten ambulances and twenty men were sent there before the end of the month. It was from the beginning one of the most successful pieces of individual effort performed by the Red Cross. Thousands of repatriated individuals, sick, unfit, and dejected, were brought through Switzerland, checked up by the proper authorities, transported to homes in the vicinity where they could recuperate, and later taken by the Red Cross to the trains awaiting to carry them to their destination. The work was so successful that in January, 1918, the American Red Cross was again approached by the French government and asked to take care of all the transportation work, and on and after February all the repatriés through Switzerland were handled by the American Red Cross.

In the midst of all its hospital work the Red Cross had given civilian relief in many villages. It set up relief centers where they were most needed and as it could not spare the personnel to run them, it put some competent villager in charge, and its rolling kitchens moved about from one point to another, feeding all the hungry who came to them, civilians, refugees, or soldiers.

During that summer the military situation was critical. The fate of the Allies seemed to be hanging in a very delicate balance, and France and England were making super-



human efforts to throw their weight, to the last gun and the last man, into the arena where the issue was to be decided. Considering this the attention that France gave to her refugee problem was remarkable. Looking back at the situation one is struck with admiration at the feats she performed and proud that the Red Cross could relieve her of a few of her countless burdens, relatively small as the proportion was.

In some of the industrial centers the increase of population, owing to an influx of refugees of all kinds, rose to twelve, fifteen and even to twenty-five per cent at a given time—more than the community could absorb. Sometimes this congestion was due to an official mistake and sometimes to the persistence of the people in seeking those towns where they believed they could find employment. Also it was not infrequently the case in some provinces that the Government provisions for benefiting refugees had, after functioning for a long time perhaps, been allowed to pass into peaceful desuetude. It was in the relief of such situations that the Red Cross operated to particular advantage.

In the Department of the Loir-et-Cher, for example, nearly twenty thousand refugees arrived during the latter part of the summer, and the territory was already overcrowded. They came in one rush with absolutely no possessions, not even sufficient clothing; some with limbs broken in the mad stampede, others bearing newly born children in their arms, for excitement and fear had as usual caused many premature births. There was the customary per cent of sick and many who were crazed with anxiety over the unknown fate of members of their families from whom they had become separated.

It was not a simple matter to care for these twenty thousand fevered people; to doctor, feed and clothe them, and provide them with living accommodations. Before 1914, it would have been a different matter, but this district had borne a constantly increasing load of war burdens

and already had had thousands of strangers billeted in its towns. It could not secure help from the neighboring Departments which had enough to occupy them in their own pressing needs. The people of the Loir-et-Cher did not dream of shirking the work that had been put upon them, but when one has given till there is little if anything left to give, such a problem as the one they had to face in August of 1918 would have seemed almost insuperable but for the fact that the American Red Cross was there to give its assistance.

Other Departments were called upon to meet situations which in all their aspects were practically the same. There are no special reasons for choosing this or that one as an example, the object being merely to point out the fitness of the Red Cross as a coöperating agent in supplementing the French work of relief.

Stationed in Paris was the main Civilian Relief Department with its executive personnel and its storehouses filled with supplies received from America or purchased in France. At various centers, which had been carefully selected after consultation with the French authorities and which were fed from the Paris stores, subsidiary warehouses had been established that were within comparatively easy reach of the corps of field-workers and delegates stationed in all the Departments from which or to which the refugees were being moved. The transportation of these stores — except the long hauls — was entirely done by the Red Cross. Such was, broadly speaking, the simple yet effective system of the organization, but this, which may be called the mechanical part, was by no means all of the work. The other side, the human side, has already been touched upon.

The Red Cross delegates sent out from Paris were of course duly accredited by the Ministry of the Interior, but thereafter it was up to them to establish diplomatic relations with the authorities of the Departments. The first step was usually a formal call upon the Préfet and

the Maire, sometimes upon the leading ecclesiastic of the special diocese, for the coöperation of these "powers" was essential to success. Thereafter the work of the delegate was largely done by means of donations of money or goods to the French relief societies already in the field; but under certain conditions the delegate formed his own societies or committees to look after the interests of various districts. As a rule he requested the authorities to appoint several persons to meet in special conference with a view to forming a permanent advisory and executive committee. When this had been chosen a visiting committee of the leading interested citizens was formed, to look into the condition of the refugee families. "Questionnaires" were drawn up, which when filled out gave in brief all the necessary information concerning those who asked for aid. All possible pains were taken both to relieve actual want and to guard against wasteful giving.

The ample funds of the Red Cross not only enabled it to assist these people, but its spirit was such that it could give without hurting their pride. There has been a good deal said about French thrift and French willingness to take. Such generalizations are no truer of France than of the United States. If they hold on more firmly to what they have than we do, it is because they have had to work harder to acquire it and because the opportunities for gain among them are infinitely less than with us. It is quite as easy to hurt their pride by forcing charity upon them as it is to hurt ours. It is easier, in fact, for the French are not so used to general charity. They are independent and individualistic to a degree. That the Red Cross established with these people a real bond of union and aroused in many a deep, personal feeling of affection for the people of the United States is proof enough of the abiding value of the work of the organization.

Within a few days after the allied advance at Château-Thierry many of the refugees from that section began to creep back toward their homes. Their dogged attachment

to the soil was characteristic. Whenever a few kilometers of ground were gained by the Allies a certain per cent of that part of the population which had not ebbed very far behind the lines in its retreat, flowed back again insistently. It was like water seeking its own level. Often a sudden movement of the lines would drive them to the rear again. Thus many of them fluctuated, living from hand to mouth, but always obstinate in their efforts to accomplish a few repairs upon their houses or to sow a handful of seeds. They sheltered themselves after a fashion in cellars and caves and improvised lean-tos, and however ragged and rain-soaked and hungry they stuck to the skirts of the armies, inching forward whenever the chance offered, retreating undismayed when forced to by shot and shell.

From the battle areas ahead other fugitives were always coming, who had no hope of a return to their ruined villages and who were unfitted to cope unaided with the conditions into which war had thrown them. The Red Cross came forward to help both these classes. That the Germans had torn the reconstruction work of many months to pieces and captured relief supplies were not sufficient reasons for a change of program. The same needs that had existed before were still present back of the fighting lines, the needs of food, shelter, clothing, medicines, and tools. In the crushing disaster that occurred when the enemy invaded the area where reconstruction had been begun one thing at least had not been destroyed, the fine relationship that had grown up between the French and the American Red Cross.

One of the first canteens started after the Allies had begun their counter-offensive was at the Château-Thierry front. Another was located at Essommes where a considerable unit was stationed to look out for the needs of that part of the Château-Thierry-Soissons salient. The Red Cross contributed largely to the support of the "Harvesters' Canteens," operated by the *Comité Américaine*

for the benefit of the farmers returning to salvage their crops. The American offensive at St. Mihiel had then been launched and the Red Cross had prepared for it by establishing base warehouses at Beauvais, Compiègne, Château-Thierry, and Sainte-Ménéhoulde, filling them to the roof with medical and other supplies for the United States Army.

Comparatively speaking there were not many casualties during the taking of the St. Mihiel salient and what work the Red Cross had to do in connection with the American Army was well handled. In fact the Red Cross had planned for a much bigger job than it was called upon to perform. After the St. Mihiel offensive was finished and the troops had established themselves there followed the advance of the French in the Champagne country under the command of General Gouraud of the Fourth Army. Six American divisions were with the French.

The Red Cross handled the work in this zone so capably that General Nivelle wrote a personal letter thanking it for the service it had rendered their division. In this offensive the Red Cross maintained a system of couriers on motorcycles and kept its advance team right back of the lines, moving forward as each *triage* hospital was moved. The couriers were in constant contact with the Red Cross divisional representatives and with the medical sections of the divisions, and delivered newspapers directly into the lines. Two of these couriers were very badly wounded in the performance of their duties. The Red Cross had canteens at practically all of the hospitals and all the dressing stations, many of which were under shell-fire every night.

When General Gouraud began to ease up a little in his attack, the Argonne, another purely American offensive, was started, and at the same time the British, with two American divisions, commenced their drive further north. The Red Cross had work to do everywhere, work that taxed its personnel and transportations to the limits of



their capacity. The British soon were hitting the enemy's lines all the way up from Verdun to the Belgian sector and the displaced population of the villages in the war areas were flying back toward the heart of France.

In the meanwhile the Red Cross was helping the opposite currents of refugees of the Aisne and the Marne, including the returning farmers. Although a portion of the wheat crop had been ruined enough remained to pay for the trouble of gathering it. The French army helped in the harvesting with scythes, mowing machines, and rakes furnished by the Red Cross. Trenches and shell-holes and miles of barbed-wire entanglements rendered the work slow and laborious. In many places the presence of quantities of unexploded grenades and shells made the use of the mowers so dangerous that the harvesting had to be done by hand. While this was going on an important refugee center was established at Amiens, which at that time was occupied by only four hundred citizens; but though its native population was reduced to this small band, fugitives were always passing through. A Red Cross canteen and *vestiaire* were started, with quarters for those who needed a temporary lodging. One of the personnel always slept at the canteen to be ready to receive these wayfarers, who not infrequently arrived at the almost deserted city at some black hour of the night.

While the situation of the refugees who had been sent in large numbers to the centers further back was less dramatic, it was grave enough urgently to demand relief. Rouen was one of the points that had been selected as a kind of clearing-house for these people. From this city they were distributed throughout the Department, but this was work which took time and the longer the delay the worse the plight of the refugees became. They were, as always, old men and women and children, worn out with fatigue and shock and weak from hunger. The Red Cross built rest-barracks for them in the public square and a dispensary that treated hundreds of sick. During the spring and



summer from five to fifteen hundred refugees passed through Rouen every day.

In other towns, such as Auxerre, Avallon, and Joigny, important places in the Department of the Yonne, the Red Cross organized French committees which it supplied with beds, tables, chairs, and other household goods, with instructions to offer them to the refugees at a price representing about three-fifths of the cost to the organization, payment to be made in monthly installments. This lack of furniture and kitchen utensils was practically a universal one among the refugees and had at first been met by the voluntary contributions of the French, but when the Red Cross began its relief work this source of supply had been drained and the factories were not making any cheap furniture such as was needed.

The Minister of the Interior, when asked by the Bureau of Refugees what it could do, spoke first and most emphatically of this need. As the supplies in the stores were practically exhausted and transportation was difficult, the Red Cross delegates of the various Departments hunted up small saw-mills where such furniture could be manufactured and had it made in the simplest way. The main object was to enable the refugees to begin again as much as possible their normal lives, and without a room and some few belongings they could call their own this result could not have been reached. The moral effect upon them of having a "foyer," as the French call it, was invaluable. It lifted them from the waif-and-stray class and gave them privacy and a certain standing. The fact that the furniture supplied by the Red Cross was sold and not given to them added to their feeling of self-respect.

Many of these people had been prosperous and thrifty and had brought their savings with them. They would have bought furniture at the stores if any had been obtainable, but the Red Cross was practically the only agency through which it could be had and they were glad to get it at the extremely moderate prices and on the easy terms

asked. To have given everything to them outright might in the end have had an undesirable influence upon these two million and more displaced people. There was danger of pauperizing them.

Innumerable stories could be told of the need of furniture among the refugees. One Red Cross district worker found the family of a miner living in a half-basement. The pale sickly children had been sleeping on the bare damp stones without even a layer of straw beneath their little bodies. A small fire in an open fireplace in one corner was the sole suggestion of comfort. There was not an article of furniture in the room. The miner had tried to get some — he was earning enough to buy a few pieces — but there was absolutely none to be had in the stores, and when he found that the Red Cross could furnish him with beds, mattresses, and other simple household articles, and all for a small sum, his gratitude was touching.

Those who opposed the selling plan at first soon realized its great advantages. They found that the refugees preferred to pay: it gave them a feeling of ownership they would not otherwise have had. They saw also that it stimulated the desire to obtain work in order that the installments might be paid, and this element was of the utmost importance. The moment that the refugees had roofs over their heads, some little property of their own if only a bed, a few chairs and a table, and paying occupation for their hands, they became self-respecting members of the community and no longer a pressing problem to it.

The money received from the furniture sales constituted a fund which was used to buy other things necessary for the maintenance of the refugees, such as kitchen utensils, sewing machines and stoves, or cows, rabbits, chickens, and other livestock. It was usually turned over to the French relief societies with whom the Refugee Bureau was coöperating, as they were more closely in touch with the changing needs of the people. From every side the

plan was probably the best one that could have been devised. Of course in those cases where real poverty existed, where there were mothers with large families and no wage-earners, for example, the Red Cross gave furniture outright, and it often added a cooking-stove, or a sewing-machine which was used by many families in common.

In some Departments where refugees had congregated the greatest need was housing; in others fuel, and so on; but it was almost always of prime importance to find employment for them. In ten Departments employment bureaus were founded by the Red Cross and where there were no possible jobs into which the newcomers could be fitted the same organization established workrooms, often in coöperation with the French societies. In all sixty-eight of these workrooms were provided. In certain sections the Red Cross furnished inducements for farmers to settle upon the land and near Bourges it obtained from the Government the right to let more than four thousand acres for cultivation.

During the months that the American Army had been in France an enormous amount of used and soiled clothing had accumulated. When the question of salvaging this arose a great deal of it was turned over to the various Red Cross bureaus of relief which had suggested that a double purpose would be served by letting the work of repairing and cleansing be done by refugees.

This very simple work proved a blessing to many thousand women who were anxious to do tasks that were not beyond their strength. One of the representatives in the Vendée relates with what eagerness it was received. The following telegram had been received from an officer of the Salvage Service: "If you can launder as well as darn socks will send two car-loads immediately. Twenty-five centimes per pair for repairing and laundering, ten centimes for those only needing washing. Wire if you can handle."

The answer was prompt and in the affirmative. The

cars arrived and were hailed with joy by the refugees who, while they had been fed and clothed, had been given no occupation for their hands and minds. They had had nothing to do but sit and grieve over their losses, or let their thoughts dwell upon the inhuman treatment to which the Germans had subjected them. The moment they were busy the refugees began to take more interest in life. A noticeable mental and physical change for the better was apparent before the end of the second week and the workers themselves unhesitatingly attributed it to the fact that they were no longer idle.

Three hundred women a week were employed at this station for two months, washing and mending socks, gloves, sweaters, mufflers, puttees and underwear for the dough-boys. No sooner had the salvage work been finished than the call came for "comfort bags" for the American Army, and for two months more these refugee women were busy at this job.

In one town a large fire threw out of employment some fifteen hundred garment makers, among whom were many refugees. In times of peace such a blow to the earning capacity of the community would have been bad enough, but during the war any upset of labor was trebly serious and demanded an immediate remedy. The district delegate of the Red Cross offered the services of the organization and after a conference with a committee of citizens it was decided that a relief fund should be given by the town, the factory management and the préfecture jointly, while the Red Cross should furnish the food necessary to tide the unemployed over the crisis. The organization also provided sewing-machines which it sold at half price on the installment plan, the refugee paying five or ten francs a month.

The Red Cross representatives at various military base hospitals had at that time begun to send in requests for comfort bags. These were simple cloth affairs which were used to hold the small personal effects of the patients:

their razors, combs, money, letters, and various odds and ends. To the uninitiated they would seem of little importance, but as a matter of fact they meant a great deal to the wounded soldier, who felt for his few possessions a sentiment quite out of proportion to their value. The first thing he did on being placed in his ward was to ask about them. In some indefinable way it lessened his feeling of loneliness to have them near him. This was soon recognized in the hospitals as a medical fact and the comfort-bag became an institution and occupied its place of honor at the head of every bed. Through the agency of the Red Cross, which furnished the material, refugee women, otherwise unemployed, were set to work making them at two francs per dozen. On an average one worker could make from three and one-half to five dozen a day, and in this way many a mother was enabled to support her family. Not only were they happy at becoming wage-earners, but the feeling that they personally were doing something for the American soldiers gave them universal pleasure.

Many of the refugees were too old to do even the lightest forms of labor and when these had no relatives or friends to take them in the Red Cross cared for them in special refuges such as those it established in the south of France. In the Basses Pyrénées it maintained a home for mothers and children who were so depleted in strength that they were unable to work. These were not ill enough to be hospital cases. Fear had become in them almost a disease that was sapping their mental and physical health and the problem of nursing them back to courage and a sound condition of body was extremely difficult. Frequently at first the children would scream hysterically when approached by a Red Cross representative. Their conception of a uniform was that it was something worn by the Germans. When the wrecked nerves of these little ones were healed they were sent to school. The women, who were all from the North and factory workers as a



rule, were curiously enough seldom able to sew. An expert seamstress was engaged to teach those who had recovered their health to cut garments and make them into clothes. Those who could do nothing else were obliged to keep their rooms clean and tidy.

For the American Red Cross delegate the refugee with his divers needs furnished a constant field for study and work. Among a thousand families scattered throughout a given Department in town and village there were sure to be many groups who were trained in some form of occupation that could be made useful to themselves and the community. It was the delegate's mission to find out these conditions either from personal visits, or those of his visiting committees, or by inquiry among local authorities and neighbors, and after consultation with the French bureaus, to draw up some practical plan of Red Cross aid to lay before Headquarters at Paris. His duties required broad sympathy and tact as well as good judgment and constant activity. They brought him into the closest contact with the French people from the highest official of the prefecture department to the most humble peasant of the countryside. He learned to know them and was known by them.

The bare figures in the reports of the Bureau — one million four hundred thousand dollars given in one month by the American Red Cross to refugee relief, one million and a quarter garments furnished, nine hundred tons of food stuffs distributed, etc.— are full of significance, but they do not tell the whole story, much of whose beauty lies in the establishment of a real bond of union between America and the people of France through the medium of the refugee relief worker, a bond which goes deeper and is more abiding than Government policies.



## CHAPTER IX

### WORK AMONG THE CHILDREN

**I**T is not to be inferred that the Red Cross set itself up as the discoverer and teacher of the principles of child-welfare work abroad, for if anything it was the other way around, some of our most valuable ideas having been borrowed from France, and there were few details of the system upon which she was not already well informed. The Red Cross had, however, the advantage of French societies in that all of these details had been tested out in the United States and that the organization could bring to bear upon the situation large funds and a corps of experts whose knowledge was practical instead of theoretical; but it had no startling truths to communicate.

The Bureau, in the course of its operation in France, worked toward more than one end and conducted various classes of activities which are best considered separately.

Its first and most obvious duty was to meet the exigencies in the child-welfare situation created by the war itself. Under this heading fell the rather extensive arrangements which were carried out for the care, feeding, and medical attendance for refugee children, with the establishment of camps, barracks, and temporary hospitals. Here also must be classed the provisions made for carrying on the ordinary hospital and dispensary services for the children of the cities, which in many cases would otherwise have had to be discontinued because of the taking over of hospitals for military purposes, the loss of medical and nursing personnel, and lack of funds. So far as it was able the Bureau met the situation by furnishing temporary hospitals, by supplying drugs, nurses, and physicians to dis-

pensaries, and often by assuming all or part of the expense of maintenance of such institutions until such time as they were once more able to operate for themselves. In some cases in districts where there was special need it established temporary dispensaries of its own.

The second class of activities had for its object a stimulation of constructive child-welfare work and an assistance in its development. To understand the reasons for this, which on first thought might seem American presumption in a country which has had so much to do with progress along this line, one must know something of present conditions in France.

For various social and economic reasons the birth-rate in France has shown a steady and alarming decline for many years, so that even before the war there were, for the whole country, considerably fewer births than deaths. The mobilization of the men necessarily lessened the number of children born. The great increase in deaths due to the war and the added economic burdens have rendered any rapid rise in the birth-rate improbable. Thus a situation has been created which must strike any observer as grave and which has greatly alarmed the French themselves.

The methods prevalent throughout France for the reduction of infant mortality have had many excellent features and the infant death rate has been held at a point which would not be considered especially serious for a more prolific race. In fact the infant mortality for the country at large has been less than in America and systematic infant-welfare work, so far as the clinical aspects are concerned, has been as general, if not more general than with us. The weak spot in the French system has been the lack of properly trained nurses and this, together with the other conditions mentioned, has brought things to a point where the very existence of the race seems to be at stake and where no possible effort for the saving of infant life can be spared.

To deal with such a problem is by no means easy. While it is comparatively a simple matter to bring about a great reduction in an abnormally high mortality, every appreciable improvement in a community where the rate is already reasonably low means a very great increase in expenditure of money and effort. Moreover, infant welfare work is not at all an exact science and each situation must be studied for itself and specific methods adopted to suit it. For France, seriously exhausted and impoverished by war, to meet this, in addition to all its other pressing needs, meant an almost superhuman effort. To the Red Cross it seemed a fitting part of its war relief work that it should give the children of France all the aid in its power while the integrity of the country was at stake.

To attempt to spread its comparatively small resources over the whole field would have been futile, and equally absurd would have been any attempt to Americanize French methods of dealing with their own people. The Red Cross chance for service seemed to be to use its available trained medical and nursing personnel, as well as its material resources, to help the French work out the special problems that presented themselves, in the light of American as well as French experience; to aid in the establishment in favorable localities of centers of effort which might serve at once as a stimulus toward, and in a sense as models for, similar development elsewhere; to further the spread of needed educational propaganda for better child hygiene; and finally, to assist in providing means of education for the workers, medical and social, necessary for any extensive campaign for the preservation of infant life.

These various aims were kept in view throughout the period of Red Cross service in France, and every effort was made, for example in the dispensaries operated for the French as well as those opened by the Bureau itself, to adapt such methods as have been especially developed in America to French conditions and to combine them with

the methods already in operation in France. Of the methods which have had a peculiarly American development, perhaps the most characteristic is the routine use of the public health nurse and the social worker, often combined in one person, to form the connection between hospital and dispensary and the home of the patient, to see that the physician's orders are carried out, to acquire information concerning home conditions and social relations, and to assist in all possible ways in remedying such of these as may have a bad influence upon the patient's physical well-being.

Public health nursing had not been developed in France before the war, and trained nurses and social workers were not as common as in America. Work of this kind was not so often carried on, though examples of it were found in some French organizations. Wherever the Children's Bureau carried on such a work it did so through its American trained child-welfare nurses and it also, in almost every district, arranged for the training of French women in the essentials of this type of social service, both by theoretical teaching and practical experience in the field under American guidance. In Paris, for instance, an arrangement was made with the French society of *Infirmières Visiteuses*, under which a considerable number of young French women went through a course consisting of lectures by prominent French specialists and practical work in dispensaries which fitted them for the prophylactic social work of a child-welfare campaign, though no pretense was made of giving them such nursing training as would fit them to care for sick children.

Of these women many are now employed in French child-welfare stations formerly assisted by the Children's Bureau, some are doing relief work for children in the devastated regions, and others have been placed with various French organizations.

The experience of the Bureau with this home-visiting service has gone far to settle an objection raised by inter-

ested French people. While admitting the value of the service they had been quite inclined to believe that their fellow countrymen were fundamentally so different from the citizens of America, so much more insistent upon the privacy of the home, that they would never welcome this kind of intrusion. As the home visitor had proved acceptable to all classes of American immigrants, the Red Cross did not put much faith in this objection and in practical experience it has had, if anything, less trouble in carrying on the work in France than at home. It would seem that the French distrust of innovations had probably more to do with the criticism than any other important difference between the two peoples. Almost every French organization for which the Bureau has installed, or made a demonstration of such a system, has been enthusiastic over the results and it seems probable that while French thrift and present financial conditions in the country will prevent its being carried out on the American scale, the institution of the *Visiteuses d'Hygiène*, which was also being introduced by the Rockefeller Commission at the same time, will meet with growing favor.

Allied with the work of the home visitors was the system of keeping social histories of the families visited, by means of a central clearing house, to avoid duplication of effort by different organizations. This did not apply simply to child-welfare work, for other agencies than the Children's Bureau united with it to promote the establishment of such offices as the *Fichier Central* in Paris created by the Bureau of Refugees of the A. R. C. to assist in coördinating various kinds of philanthropic work.

The *Fichier* consisted of a comprehensive index of needy families. It was established upon slips in double series — one of proper names in alphabetical order, the other of streets similarly arranged. These were made up from the lists of families or individuals helped by various charitable societies, and the greater the number of societies which put

themselves in touch with the system the more valuable the work of the bureau became.

Any one who desired to aid in cases of alleged want consulted the bureau whose files revealed whether the cases were or were not deserving. They might for example show that the cases had already been sufficiently well taken care of by other charitable organizations. The system was impersonal and impartial. It guarded the privacy of those in need as well as made their wants known and enabled assistance to be given with rapidity and precision. Moreover it acted as a bond between the various charitable societies, placing the information and experience of all at the disposal of each one. That its usefulness was quickly appreciated was proved by the fact that the number of families inscribed upon its lists rose from forty-five hundred to fifty thousands in about five months.



## CHAPTER X

### MEURTHE-ET-MOSELLE

ONE of the most urgent needs that faced the Children's Bureau at the outset arose from the situation of the children of the devastated areas in what was known as the *Zone des Armées*. This Zone, which extended along the irregular front lines of the enemy, was about thirty miles deep and the majority of towns within it were wholly or partially destroyed or in constant danger from shell fire and aerial bombing and exposed to sudden military invasion from one side or the other.

Many of the inhabitants had deserted this battle-scarred area during the early years of the war, but there were occupied villages left when the American Red Cross arrived in France and from these old men and women and children were constantly being sent back, sometimes for short periods only during acute bombardments, at other times for what amounted to a permanent evacuation.

The situation was particularly acute in the Department of the Meurthe-et-Moselle of which the chief city is Nancy, often called, because of its beauty, "the little Paris." It stands close to the border and it was almost an axiom at the beginning of hostilities that it would be at the mercy of the hordes of the enemy as soon as they wished to take it and that the Uhlans, without firing a shot, would encamp in its Place Stanislas.

The Germans did in fact strike in that quarter almost at once, their main goal being the military stronghold of Toul, situated a short distance to the west. Their army swept forward till it reached a point about thirteen kilometers away from the outskirts of the city. The Kaiser

himself was with his troops and was preparing to make a triumphal entry upon his famous white horse, but the victory that seemed already in his hands proved elusive. The French resistance stiffened. The Germans were held where they were and dug themselves in, foreseeing that the way to their objective was not to be reached as easily as they had expected.

They never reached it though they brought fire and death and worse than death to all the countryside. In the whole history of the war there are no blacker pages than those that record the deeds of the Germans in this region. Fugitives from the burning villages poured into Nancy and the city itself suffered repeatedly from the bombardments and the attacks of *aéroplanes*, but under the courageous leadership of *Préfet Mirman* and the Mayor of the city, the people remained calmly industrious. No one who could work was permitted to be idle. The war had brought about an unusual condition: free-thinkers fraternized with ardent Catholics, and Socialists went hand-in-hand with the most notorious reactionaries, all busy at some useful occupation, either in the factories or the newly created municipal work-shops for making sand-bags, musettes, gas-masks, or mattresses for the troops. In the center of the city a shop was established where the women made lace and embroidery.

But in spite of its spirit, life was hard in Nancy, especially for the children, whose diet and normal outdoor life were very much interfered with. The population of the city had decreased since the beginning of the war notwithstanding the number who sought refuge there, but it was large enough to make its maintenance a constant problem and it was difficult to give the little ones the sort of care necessary in a town where bombardments were frequent. The same conditions were true of the neighboring towns in which fugitives had gathered.

The Department of the *Meurthe-et-Moselle* was a most important munition center. Scattered along the valleys of

the two rivers were great *usines* for the production of materials of war. Some of these towns were exposed to shell-fire from the German guns which "strafed" them more or less regularly: all of them were subject to aerial raids. When the weather was favorable few nights passed that the German bombing-planes did not visit some section of the region, striving to wreck the factories and break the spirit of the people. Many of the civilian hospitals were closed, or had suffered a curtailment of their services owing to the fact that practically all of the doctors and *infirmières* were enrolled in army hospitals. The various charitable organizations, never broadly developed, were hampered by war conditions. Homes were daily destroyed by air-raids and families broken up, leaving mothers helpless to perform the double duty of working in the factories and caring for their children. When the Germans began to use gas-bombs, the towns near the front lines became practically untenable for children who were too young to appreciate the necessity of wearing masks. Such was the general situation in this section which the Red Cross was called upon to relieve.

In the summer of 1917 a particularly severe gas attack and air-raid drove several hundred children from their homes. The Préfet of the Department already had on his hands as many refugees as he could well care for and in this emergency he called upon the A. F. F. W., the American Fund for French Wounded, for aid. The work of relief was more than that society could undertake alone. The Red Cross therefore lent its coöperation, and a small corps of doctors and nurses from both organizations were sent to Nancy with food and supplies.

The children had been gathered together at the French military barracks situated on the summit of a hill between Nancy and Toul. The *barraquement* possessed no hospital equipment and, as it stood, was not suitable for an orphanage, but there was no alternative. Moreover the mothers were not willing to send their children farther into France

where they would be unable to visit them. The site itself was favorable in that it was isolated and therefore comparatively safe.

The personnel lent by the A. F. F. W. soon left to return to their special duties, leaving the work in the hands of the Red Cross at that time establishing its Children's Bureau, which had received its start through a fund raised in the city of Boston. The force of Red Cross representatives at the *Asile Caserne du Luxembourg*, as the *barraquement* at Toul was called, worked well, handicapped as they were by their small numbers, to put the buildings into proper condition to house the children. An infirmary was started and a few dispensaries opened in the vicinity of Nancy, but these by no means met the increasing emergencies arising in the department which was very much in need of this form of service.

About the beginning of the winter the Red Cross sent a large personnel to Toul with instructions to expand the field of activity. The fact that this important ammunition center lay so close to the German lines cannot be over-emphasized. Great battles such as those waged along the line toward the north and northwest were not being fought out here, but the enemy were harassing it constantly with artillery and aëroplanes and seeking with equal assiduity to undermine its morale by the most insidious forms of propaganda. There were few men left in the department. All who were fit had been mobilized and their women were carrying on at the factories and trying to look after their children at the same time. Wounded poilus often said to the nurses at the military hospitals: "It is all right for us. We are being well taken care of here, but what is becoming of our wives and little ones?" No provision had been made by the French for the medical care of the families of the soldiers on that front.

Whatever work the Red Cross could do among the homes would have its direct influence upon the men who had been

bearing the horrors of the trenches so long and with such wonderful patience. This was one of the factors that determined the organization to develop the hospital at *Asile Caserne du Luxembourg* and extend its medical service to cover every important town in the Department.

The infirmary already started was speedily enlarged and contributory dispensaries installed at such main towns as were focal points of the little brood of villages round about them. At each dispensary was a doctor, a children's nurse, an automobile and a chauffeur. In the small near by villages clinical posts were established, in the *Mairie* or the school-house perhaps, which were visited every day by the personnel from the main town, one such unit being able to look after six or seven towns.

Before long there were base dispensaries at Foug, Nancy, Neuve-Maison, Lunéville, and at Épinal, each with its outlying clinics. Besides the simple medical treatment given the patients the Red Cross tried to teach the mothers the laws of cleanliness, diet, hygiene, both by talk and attractive cards and pamphlets. The minor ills of many of the children were due to the fact that they were not kept clean. If they were inadequately clad, shoes and warm underclothing and other garments were provided. A fine friendly relation grew up between these people and the Red Cross, to whom they took many of their troubles and from whom they always received aid, if aid was justified.

There were very few cases where there was any attempt made to take advantage of this spirit of helpfulness. On the contrary the people often showed a delicacy of feeling remarkable considering their needs. It was customary for the Red Cross, where there was real destitution, to grant the family credit at some local provision store for a few weeks. When these people failed to report for further aid one of the personnel would be sent to investigate. Sometimes the women had found employment and were supporting themselves, but others had another reason for





#### "DISPENSARE"

This word, wherever it appeared together with the banner of the American Red Cross in France, meant a place where women and children could find medical aid, and when needed, special foods, and not infrequently there was a Vestiaire that supplied clothes that were often as necessary as medicines.





their absence. "You have been so kind as to help us for some weeks," they said; "we couldn't come again." In the town of Foug a woman sold a pair of shoes that the Red Cross had given her. They were too small for the child and the mother was desperately poor, but the act aroused a tumult of indignation and the citizens almost drove her out of the town because she had sold a gift of the American Red Cross.

The work spread until the monthly consultations numbered about nine thousand. When an examination at the clinic showed that a child was seriously ill or needed an operation it was taken to the *Asile Caserne du Luxembourg*. Thus the dispensaries fed the hospitals and the growth of the two kept pace. The number of operations, many of them major operations, ran between one hundred and sixty to one hundred and seventy-five a month.

The system worked smoothly and effectively for the confidence of the people had been won. The mothers thought little of walking twenty or thirty kilometers with their babies in their arms, so great was their desire to have the American doctors examine them. The little refugees permanently installed at the barracks were so well looked after that they lost their nervousness and depression and their ill-nourished bodies grew plump and healthy. Not a single death occurred among them while they were under Red Cross care. One of the buildings had been turned into a school-room where they studied under French teachers. Hours of recreation were set apart during which they were taught to play vigorous and interesting outdoor games. It was pathetic to see their apathy and awkwardness at first, but they soon entered into the sports with as much zest as any young Americans.

About seven hundred women and children, mainly refugees from the towns destroyed by the Germans in the Lorraine sector, were housed at the barracks. As the Germans had seized most of the cattle in the Department the securing of sufficient milk was always a problem, but

the Red Cross managed in one way or another to provide enough for the babies. The baby problem at Nancy was meanwhile becoming acute; or rather the problem of caring for maternity cases for which there existed no adequate provision. The small accommodations that did exist were finally destroyed one night during a bombing-raid by the enemy during which several of the women in the hospital miscarried. The Préfet turned to the Red Cross for aid.

"How soon can you take care of these patients?" he asked. The Red Cross replied: "You can send them tomorrow."

There were no extra supplies on hand. A rule that was later rescinded had been passed, forbidding the unit to draw upon the warehouses at Toul and Nancy without permission from Paris. As it was impossible to deal through Paris and meet the emergency, it was necessary to strip the hospital at Toul of the needed material. By doubling up here and there — putting two children in one cot — by begging sheets and blankets from the American Fund for French Wounded and by requisitioning other supplies wherever it was possible, wards for fourteen women and ten babies were equipped within the twenty-four hours. One hour after the arrival of the patients from Nancy the first babies were born.

From that time on to the day the Red Cross withdrew from the refugee home, the maternity hospital became a fixed part of the institution. When supplies were obtained from Paris it was enlarged to forty-six beds with twenty cribs and at the end about fifty babies a month were being born there.

While the Red Cross work at Toul was at its height the battle at Château-Thierry began. The French had learned that the Germans were preparing for a great drive through Lorraine. In consequence they deemed it possible that they might have to fall back and strengthen the lines that must block the way to Paris, giving up such military bases as Lunéville, Nancy, and Toul. This would mean the

evacuation of nearly sixty thousand people. In the emergency the authorities appealed to the Red Cross, who laid its plans to make an orderly retreat with the refugees and to use its personnel to man the *postes de secours* established by the French. Temporary accommodations were provided at Bois d'Évêque for the seven hundred and fifty persons living at the *Caserne du Luxembourg* and food supplies for ten days were stored there. For two or three weeks, while things hung in the balance, a Red Cross medical unit was kept at Bois d'Évêque attending to the needs of the several thousand refugees who streamed into the place.

Two weeks before the American offensive began at the St. Mihiel salient, the Red Cross unit at Toul received an order to turn the formation into a military hospital of twelve hundred or fifteen hundred beds. It was a blow to the civil community, but military necessity had to come first. The unit planned to establish a hospital for civilians to replace that at Toul, but this was not deemed expedient. Almost two hundred patients were sent to their homes. Those too sick to be so disposed of were carried to the American Red Cross civil hospital at Neufchâteau. Nearly five hundred children, women, and refugee workers, were entrained for the distant city of Lyon whither it had been ordered that the children should go. There were tears and many hopes expressed that some day they might return to Toul, but not one sign to indicate that they failed to appreciate the need for this radical change in their lives.

The history of the military hospital at Toul does not belong here. The Red Cross unit with the generous cooperation of the Préfet, M. Mirman,—the right of disposing of the *barraquements* rested with the French civil authorities—made the requested change and on the day the American offensive opened had ready seven hundred beds completely equipped; eight hundred cots and blankets in reserve; an operating room of eight tables, with a ster-

ilizing room and all the necessary medical and surgical equipment; clothes for twenty-five hundred men, and food supplies, cooks and kitchens sufficient to care for fifteen hundred men a day for one month.

That night three hundred American and German wounded arrived. Two hundred came the next night and as many more the night following. Then another change was instituted. The formation was turned from an evacuation into a base hospital and thereafter all of its fifteen hundred beds were occupied. In such manner did a civil hospital of the Red Cross serve the needs of the American army in an emergency.

At the beginning of the dispensary work the Red Cross had had an affiliation with the A. F. F. W. which had some personnel already on the spot, a certain amount of supplies, and had established a relationship with the people. The Red Cross furnished the doctors, the medical supplies, and the technical training, and it stood ready to provide funds where they were needed. The development and direction of the work really lay in the hands of the Red Cross, but the two organizations worked harmoniously together. A separation was effected later, the Red Cross leaving the A. F. F. W. a sufficient number of doctors, whose salaries it paid up to the first of January so that the society could put its affairs in order.

There is an interesting corollary to the closing of the civil hospital at Toul. The children who had been sent to Lyon were installed at Lachaux, but the time came when the American army needed more hospital space for its wounded and again the little ones were obliged to move. The Préfet consented to arrange for their reshipment back to Toul, but by some error no announcement was received until the day before the children arrived. The band of four hundred and fifty suddenly appeared at Toul where no accommodations had been provided for them. From there they were sent to Nancy where they were dis-

tributed among temporary quarters, or wherever possible returned to their families, but the majority remained a burden upon the community. The Red Cross considered that its obligations had not been fully discharged in this case and a gift of two hundred thousand francs was granted the Préfet for the future care of the homeless children.

In the town of Foug practically all of the inhabitants were engaged in the making of munitions, under conditions resembling those found in so many factory towns of the United States. Restaurants, a coöperative store and a modern bath-house had been provided for the workmen and their families by the progressive foundry company. When the Red Cross dispensary was established there the *directeur*, impressed by the results it obtained, became so interested in the work of the organization that he offered to give the land, the labor, and the material for a permanent hospital if the Red Cross would equip it and install a personnel of doctors, nurses and servants for the duration of the war. The Red Cross agreed and a brick and tile hospital, up-to-date in all its details, was built without delay. With its dispensary and milk station it forms today a model health center. At the end of the war it was taken over by the Women's Overseas Hospital Unit as agents for the A. F. F. W. to be continued by them for a short period, the directorate of the foundry having guaranteed to back it financially.

Tuberculosis work was not undertaken on a large scale in the department of the Meurthe-et-Moselle, but the Red Cross established two *cure d'airs*, one at Nancy, the other at Lunéville where some aid could be given pre-tubercular and early tubercular cases among children and young adults. As their name implies these *cure d'airs* were out-of-door rest-camps where the patients were provided with three substantial meals a day, remaining in the open air under comfortable conditions



from seven in the morning till six at night. Simple as the treatment was it brought about a remarkable improvement in the condition of the majority of the sufferers, but the greatest value undoubtedly lay in the educational demonstration of a practical and inexpensive way of dealing with most cases of the disease at a period when relief and often cure may be readily secured.

The work of the Red Cross throughout the Department was warmly appreciated by the French who gave it their grateful coöperation. At one time the taking over of the *Asile Caserne* at Toul for military purposes was considered by the authorities. Before dispossessing the Red Cross, then occupying the barracks, an investigation was made of the activities of the organization and these were judged so important that the plan was abandoned and the unit left in undisturbed possession of its quarters. That the civil authorities were equally convinced of its usefulness was proved in many ways not the least of which was the fact that at a time when the needs of the community were large the Red Cross paid rent on only two properties in all the twenty-six towns in which it was established.

## CHAPTER XI

### PARIS DISPENSARIES

PARIS and its immediate suburbs were the scene of great activity on the part of the Children's Bureau. Fourteen separate dispensaries were maintained or helped to operate in this particular district. The Bureau also established and conducted, in coöperation with the *Infirmières Visiteuses de France*, the training course already mentioned and put into good condition and operated for a considerable time a very large *pouponnière* which has now gone back to French management. It leaves behind, besides a number of improvements in the service of the various institutions and minor donations for their support, three important and very different permanent foundations.

The fourteenth Arrondissement, one of the largest and most densely populated portions of the city of Paris, has enjoyed the reputation of being in many ways a model. The Bureau, working in connection with the *Mairie* and some of the local organizations, selected this district as the scene of an interesting experiment.

Under the direction of the Bureau an association was formed, known as the *Patronage Franco-Américaine*, which had for its object the systematic supervision of all babies born in the arrondissement. The birth lists from the Mayor's office were followed up by the *Visiteuses d'Hygiène* — the welfare visitors — and the babies cared for at three *consultations des nourissons* so situated as to be readily accessible to the whole quarter.

The special feature of the arrangement was the provision of a kind of "mothers' pensions," in order that the

women who otherwise would have to wean their babies and go to work might be enabled to stay at home and nurse them. This was done on rather a large scale with money furnished by the Red Cross and the results have seemed to be excellent, not only in the lowering of infant morbidity and mortality, but in raising the percentage of breast-fed babies to a very unusually high figure. The French people interested in the experiment were extremely gratified by the outcome, and it has attracted a good deal of outside attention. The work is to be continued another year with funds furnished by the Red Cross and the Department of the Seine. The *Patronage* was recently organized in such a way as to put it more definitely under the civil administration, a very complete system of pre-natal work having been installed and provision made for taking in other similar organizations with the idea that it would eventually become a complete center for the arrondissement of all kinds of child-welfare effort.

The nineteenth arrondissement is one of the very poor quarters of Paris, where housing and living conditions are bad and mortality from all causes has been high. It was selected by the Rockefeller Commission as the section of Paris in which to make a demonstration of methods of anti-tuberculosis work, and as this and child-welfare activity are very closely related, the Red Cross started here, in coöperation with the Commission, an organization intended to comprise as nearly as possible all the important branches of child-welfare effort.

The beginning was made with three dispensaries, in each case under the same roof with the anti-tuberculosis dispensaries, in which were conducted *consultations des nourissons* and clinics for older children. Development from this point was, however, greatly hindered for a time by calls upon the personnel for war work. Our army had struck its first blow at Château-Thierry, and now while the second great battle of the Marne was raging, found itself short of necessary nursing and medical personnel

to care for its increasing number of wounded. The Children's Bureau drew heavily upon its forces to meet the military need, making up for the loss as best it could with French aides and curtailing its hospital work, but keeping up its organization in skeletonized form. Forty per cent of the Bureau's nurses at Toul, for example, where the Red Cross was maintaining a home and hospital service for the children of that devastated district, answered the call of our army. It was the same everywhere and the Red Cross was able to furnish invaluable assistance to the United States Medical Corps in this emergency.

Late in the fall of 1918, conditions for a resumption of the relief work for the children of France became more favorable. In Paris, in the nineteenth arrondissement, a very complete system of operation was worked out. When the dispensary group, with its system of home-visiting, general social service and training of *visiteuses* was well under way, a form of school nursing that proved very satisfactory was established in the two chief groups of schools. A home visiting service was introduced for purposes of demonstration in the neighboring dispensary of the *Assistance Publique* and later the nurses of the Bureau helped to train volunteer French *visiteuses* for this institution. The next step planned was a visiting home-keeping service and a series of food clinics and classes in dietetics. As the dispensaries were already over-crowded this required a new center, and the house finally obtained was by a very natural evolution soon converted into a genuine social settlement in which six of the personnel of the Bureau took up their residence. Kindergarten and playground activities were added, clubs formed for men, women, and boys; classes in English, which were much appreciated, were established and the house in the rue Clavel became, and is to-day, a well-rounded and active social center of the type so familiar in America, with great apparent possibilities for the future.

A French committee has recently been formed to carry

on this whole system, with the mayor of the arrondissement as its honorary president. The connection with the administration is not at present as close as in the fourteenth, but it seems likely that in time a very similar arrangement will be worked out. An American settlement worker will remain to direct the settlement house for at least a year, funds for her maintenance, as well as some other financial assistance for the French committee, having been provided by a group of citizens of Detroit. A recent addition to its activities has been the establishment by the American Y. W. C. A. of one of its "*Foyers des Alliés*" in the building. The future career of an institution so characteristically Anglo-American as this type of settlement in French surroundings will be very interesting to observe.

A feature of special interest in the work of the Bureau in Paris has been the development of the system of pre-natal work, consisting on the one hand of pre-natal consultations in the districts, with complete medical and social records and a very good house-visiting service, and on the other hand of a system of *visiteuses* attached to the important maternity hospitals, to establish a connection between them and the homes, and after the children are born to see that their mothers have the advantage of the *consultations des nourissons*. Systematic arrangements of this kind are needed almost everywhere in the United States as well as in France. This is one of the numerous cases where the personnel of the Bureau, having ample assistance and being untrammelled by outside duties, have been able to work out abroad things which they would have liked to do at home, where the opportunity was lacking. For this reason, as well as because of the really valuable information obtained from the French, the experience of the Red Cross workers in France leaves them better fitted for public service in America.

The most important foundation in which the Bureau has had a hand in Paris, now occupying the Hospital Edith

Cavell, but ultimately to have a building of its own, is that for a school of *pediatrics* in connection with the Faculty of Medicine. This is to be directed by a committee of the Faculty and is intended to provide every facility for the training of students and graduates in medicine, nurses, *visiteuses* and social workers in everything pertaining to the care and well-being of the child. An endowment fund of two million francs has been provided, half by the Red Cross and half by popular subscription. An annual government subvention of fifty thousand francs has been voted by the Department for this purpose, and the money for the building is furnished by a sum of approximately two hundred and fifty thousand francs raised by the children of the United States as a gift to the children of France.



## CHAPTER XII

### WORK IN OTHER CITIES

**I**N the Department of the *Seine Inférieure* a good deal was done by the Bureau for Belgian refugee children in connection with the American Red Cross Commission for Belgium. The centers of this were at Rouen and Le Havre, and in the course of their operations these two organizations developed a service for the care of children of the immediate districts which in Rouen especially became a very complete child-welfare system with a hospital, dispensaries in the city and outlying towns, a complete social service, a beginning of playground activities, school nursing, etc. Every possible use was made of local institutions. The personnel was mainly French and pains were taken to adapt the work to the French situation and methods, and to maintain harmonious relations with the local faculty of medicine and the various philanthropic agencies. The Préfet saw the possibilities of the organization and arranged ultimately to take it over under the auspices of the préfecture in such a way that it seems to be the very satisfactory nucleus for a departmental system of child-welfare work, capable of indefinite extension along the same lines. Combining as it does practically all of the essentials of welfare work for children, and being really unique in its relation to the administration of the Department, this establishment may well be a source of pride to the Red Cross.

During the war the population of the city of Marseilles increased by almost half a million and, as in other cities of France, it was impossible to build houses to keep pace with the sudden growth. A part of this new population

was military in character, but there were thousands of refugees also, a large percentage of whom were children. The problem of the orphaned or abandoned child was present in its most distressing form and the death rate had risen to forty-nine per cent.

Early in 1918 the Red Cross sent a unit to help the French societies to relieve conditions among the children of this city. The program was much the same as those adopted in cases that have already been described. Dispensaries and a nursing service were established and a number of charitable institutions engaged in child-welfare work were helped. From Marseilles the Red Cross work extended to such neighboring towns as Avignon and St. Maximum, for nearly every city in Southern France had its refugees.

Avignon, with fifty thousand inhabitants, possessed neither hospital nor dispensary and physicians were very scarce. There was in fact only one to every twenty thousand inhabitants throughout France in 1917, against one to every five hundred in America. Not far from Marseilles were two towns of twenty-five thousand inhabitants where there were but two doctors, both over seventy-five years old. The Red Cross started a dispensary in one of them, the town of Corbeil, furnishing a doctor and four nurses' aids who by means of several bicycles managed to attend to the medical needs of the civil population of the towns and a good many American soldiers besides.

In Marseilles the Red Cross brought together the representatives of nearly fifty French institutions for the purpose of uniting on one comprehensive program of child-welfare work and the result was the formation of the Office Central, which eventually took over all the activities when the Red Cross terminated its work in the city.

The worst conditions were not always in the big cities. Sometimes a small town received more than its share of refugees from the North, or through lack of proper accommodations too many were housed under one roof and as

most of them were old, or delicate women and young children whose health, owing to the hardships and privations they had endured was not of the best, sickness soon broke out among them. The various bureaus and departments of the Red Cross had their ostensible fields to which they were supposed to confine their efforts, but eventually there was much dovetailing and in emergencies, red tape, if any existed, was ignored and the necessary relief given by whatever Red Cross unit found itself upon the spot. The Children's Bureau did much work among the refugees, old and young. Some of the conditions they met in the small towns of the South of France rivaled those of the slums of the crowded cities.

In a town of two thousand inhabitants about two hundred and eighty refugees, most of them children, had been placed and a unit from the Bureau was dispatched to try to better their condition as it was reported that there was typhoid among them. Typhoid in one of these southern towns is no light matter and this village, sitting in a bowl among the mountains, offered favorable opportunities for the birth of an epidemic. It had no sewer system and its water supply was derived from a common well from which it was pumped to a fountain in the center of the town where every one came with their pails and pitchers. All the clothes of the inhabitants were washed at a public *lavoir*. The garbage and refuse from the houses was placed in the street and collected once a week, and as flies were plentiful and the weather warm, conditions could hardly have been called hygienically perfect.

The refugees had been housed in two old hotels and an ancient convent to which each century had added its quota of dirt. Having no other means of disposing of it they had thrown their garbage on to the roof of an annex. Dysentery and pneumonia had carried off two of them on the night before the arrival of the Red Cross, and one child was found dying of tubercular meningitis and three were ill with pneumonia. There were twenty-



#### FOR THE CHILDREN

Wherever the Red Cross hung out its sign in France, and that was nearly everywhere that help was needed, children gathered for the aid that willing hands extended to them.





seven cases of typhoid and dysentery and fifteen cases of skin diseases.

The Red Cross took one of the hotels in hand and gave it such a scrubbing and cleaning as it had never had before in the course of its long existence, and into this renovated building they moved the sick, not without some opposition on the part of the mothers, who looked upon a hospital as the final step toward the cemetery; an obsession not infrequently encountered among the country people of France.

The food furnished the refugees was coarse and ill-adapted to the needs of the patients, but with the condensed milk and rice and other vegetables it was able to secure, the Red Cross managed to make up a reasonably good bill-of-fare. It also furnished the necessary medicines. Bad conditions had been going on so long, however, that the fight was very much of an uphill one at first, and, for a time, each day brought its fresh cases of typhoid, dysentery, pneumonia, grippe and bronchitis. The old convent where those who were not actually sick were housed, was cleaned and whitewashed and the refuse and garbage burned. Both groups, the sick and the well, were carefully tended and by the end of six weeks the various diseases were finally driven out of the little colony, which had been restored to a fair state of health.

At about the same time that work for the children of the Meurthe-et-Moselle was started an appeal for aid came from the town of Nesle, situated in the center of that area from which the Germans were driven in March, 1917. It is a region of leveled villages, dead orchards, and fields gashed and torn by trenches and shells. The British had won it back from the enemy, but it was still in the War Zone and Nesle itself was under constant danger from air-raids when the Red Cross unit arrived there. In the neighboring towns and hamlets were some twelve hundred children, all of them dirty and badly fed and many of them ill. The Red Cross immediately opened a clinic and



in October established a small hospital. The condition and health of the children rapidly began to improve, but there were certain adverse factors in the situation that could not be eliminated. It was bitterly cold and the heating provisions were inadequate. Night after night that winter the enemy *aëroplanes* came and the nurses had to seek refuge in the damp cellar, often with desperately sick children in their arms.

On the 15th of February, 1918, the Fifth British Army took up its headquarters in the town and that night the German planes killed thirty British soldiers and wounded many. The next month the Germans began their great drive, advancing with unexpected speed, the British army falling back before them. Word was sent the Red Cross that it must evacuate at once. So rapid were the movements of the enemy's forces that the Red Cross personnel took only a handbag apiece and what supplies they could hastily collect, leaving behind all their belongings which they could not wear or carry in their hands. Arrangements were made for the evacuation of the children. In the camion with the personnel went Daniel, an eight weeks' old baby; a girl of fourteen with tuberculosis; several patients suffering from burns and several little convalescents. They rode out of the town with the roar of the battle ringing in their ears.

Two nights were spent at Roye and then the order was given to get out. Nesle had become a heap of ruins behind them and its homeless people were gathering at Roye together with refugees from Ham and other villages along the line of the German advance. When the Red Cross camion started on its way to Montdidier it found the roads congested with moving throngs; travelers on foot, carts piled high with household belongings, droves of cattle, slowly and quietly journeying away from the homes which there was small chance of their ever seeing again. The patience of the French people under such crushing blows was due not to any lack of vitality, but to a kind of Spartan

firmness that refused to waver in the face of reverses however severe.

Little Daniel seemed to possess to the full the indomitable spirit of his race. Usually hungry, always tired and sleepy and uncomfortably jostled, jolted and stained with the thick dust of travel, he rode on with his Red Cross friends till at last they reached Amiens, to one of whose hospitals his sick mother had been sent. He must have thought it a most hospitable city for he received there his first meal of that day, after a fast of eight hours. Throughout the whole trip from Nesle to Amiens he had never whimpered.

When this same great German drive was on the Red Cross sent a unit to Beauvais into which the refugees, many of whom were leaving their homes for the second time, were pouring in great numbers. Sick children lay on the floor of the railway station and others were constantly arriving. The majority of the babies had not had a mouthful of hot food for two days, or much that was cold either. The Red Cross carried hot milk and bread to the trainloads of wretched people who otherwise would have had nothing to eat. The sick were tended and removed as soon as possible to a private home which the Red Cross took over as a hospital. No one paid any attention to hours of work, but went on to the point and often beyond the point, where physical exhaustion made a rest imperative.

This incident of Beauvais has no special significance but is cited as an example of the emergency work, pure and simple, that the Children's Bureau performed so repeatedly and of which often only the briefest if any record was kept, except in the more notable cases.

The large personnel of Red Cross child-welfare workers stationed at Lyon carried on two definite activities. The first concerned the care of the children of repatriés and refugees and involved the establishment of dispensaries working in concert with local charitable societies, a hos-

pital for infants and children, a contagious hospital, a convalescent home, and a country place for summer outings. The second activity which was in the nature of an educational campaign included a very successful Baby Show, the training of a corps of French women as visiting nurses, the coördination of the local charitable efforts, and the granting of subsidies to various worthy institutions.

The work was extended to some of the small towns in the neighborhood of Lyon. At Vienne, for example, which had a working population of twenty thousand, a rest-house for pregnant women was established, with a *pouponnière* where delicate babies were cared for, and a Red Cross doctor made weekly trips to Roanne where the municipal authorities had fitted up a dispensary. When the organization on December 29 announced the withdrawal of its personnel from Lyon, it presented the city with one hundred thousand francs and a plan for carrying on the work.

The convalescent home for the children was the beautiful Château des Halles, lent by the owner for this purpose. It was situated about thirty miles from Lyon in an immense park and with its wide outlook, its quiet, and its beds and banks of flowers it proved an ideal place for the listless young invalids. Their state before they were sent into the country was, as one nurse said, appalling. It was a matter of building up their systems, but youth is wonderfully elastic and with fresh air, nourishing food, and what medical attention was necessary in an amazingly short time the little patients became healthy boys and girls with a newly developed fondness for the out-of-doors life and vigorous sports of all kinds. Their day began at six A. M. with drills and exercises before a breakfast of chocolate, followed at seven-thirty A. M. by bread and butter. The hours for study, play-work and regular exercise were carefully planned. The children were kept at the château until they had fully recovered, when they were evacuated to the *Secours des Repatriés* at Lyon, whence they were eventually returned to their parents if they had



#### HELPING THEM TO GET WELL

This it will be noted is a barracks-hospital of which the one near Neufchâteau was representative of several civilian establishments in France. Not only medical attention and nursing, but entertainment as well was supplied.





any — a great many were orphans — or to relatives or friends.

The French Child-welfare Societies at Lyon, or most of them, had become temporarily impoverished during the war and as they only needed funds in order to continue the excellent work they had been doing, the Red Cross assisted them with certain sums of money. Regular monthly subventions were given to six of them. In this manner the Red Cross helped hundreds of run-down children to have summer vacations and gave aid in the form of nursing bonuses to a great many mothers who otherwise would have been forced to place their babies with wet nurses while they themselves sought work in the factories.

A contagious hospital and a bureau for the examination of the children of repatriés were established at Dieppe and medical and nursing aid given the Society of Friends, chiefly to assist in the work at their two centers, Châlons-sur-Marne and Sermaize and at Le Glandier where the Society maintained a colony of some seven hundred refugee children from Belgium. At one time there were five Red Cross nurses and an equal number of aids on duty at this colony and at various times the Red Cross supplied it with doctors, nose and throat specialists and dentists.

The Le Glandier colony was an interesting experiment and one that attained a large measure of success. The initial aim of the Society was to build up the health of the children by daily play in the open air. They arrived in poor condition, sluggish and apathetic and so listless that they preferred to huddle around the stoves in the damp *réfectoire* rather than make the least effort. With great patience and sympathy the Society gradually roused a willingness to play by starting the children on interesting games such as soccer and baseball, modified to suit sabots, the muddy court, and the large number of players. Singing games and rope-skipping were taught to the girls.

When the school had at last caught the necessary spirit a more important part of the work was begun — boy



scouting — which offered a good means of developing the boys morally and mentally as well as physically. Fourteen of the bigger ones, leaders in the school, were chosen as a nucleus and scouting was inaugurated on Sundays and continued at odd hours during the week.

Brought up in an industrial town these boys were quite out of their element at first. They had to begin by learning to enjoy the out-of-door life by playing simple games or following trails through the woods. As their interest grew they were taught some of the points of scout law, such as elementary hygiene, knot-tying, etc. Their number was soon doubled and finally raised to sixty. There was no longer any doubt about the success of the plan. The enthusiasm spread to the girls who, welcoming the Society's suggestion to take up a similar form of play-work, presently formed themselves into a band of Camp Fire Girls under experienced women instructors.

All the children learned to play with a zealousness and spontaneity such as probably had never before animated them in their games. Regular exercise and daily baths inculcated in them an entirely new appreciation of bodily cleanliness and the spirit of fair play was born among them. The initial air of hostility toward the teachers and the tendency to bully their playmates that was noticeable among the so-called "bad" boys gradually disappeared and little by little there came about a complete change of character, mean traits and uncleanly habits being replaced by a boyish manliness and orderly ways of living. As for their physical condition, a Red Cross dentist said of them in 1918, that he "had never seen a healthier-looking bunch."

At the time of their arrival at Le Glandier under the escort of two Red Cross nurses and a Belgian physician these children had been in an exceptionally poor condition, victims of "nerves," with frozen feet, fevers and colds, mouths dirty and diseased, and heads filled with lice. For two months the Red Cross nurses cared for them

ceaselessly, working almost twenty-four hours a day, but the splendid results were worth the pains.

Among the French women employed by the United States camouflage factory at Dijon were many who had small children. Times were hard and though these little ones were so young that they needed a mother's care they also required food and clothing which could not be obtained save by the wages the women could earn. To assist these mothers the Red Cross took over a small barrack in the factory grounds and turned it into an attractive crèche with cribs and other essential fittings. The endeavor had a double effect. The babies were made comfortable and happy and a number of women who had hitherto felt obliged to stay at home, realizing that the children would now have skilled care, applied for work. As the factory had been having great difficulty in turning out sufficient material to supply the demands of the Army the influence of the crèche on production was distinctly helpful. Thus it might be said that these babies contributed their mite toward the winning of the war.

The school at Danmarie-les-Lys for refugee children from Alsace-Lorraine which was supported by the French government, was given Red Cross assistance in the form of medical aid and pharmacy equipment. At Bobigny the Red Cross furnished medical supervision of a French dispensary run by the commune and also gave some money and supplies. The people of this town were very poor and ignorant, living for the most part in small huts of crude construction, some of which had neither windows nor floors, being little better than cowsheds. While the place was usually a sea of mud there were few wells and cisterns and the majority of the inhabitants depended upon the canal for their water supply. What with these living conditions and the fact that, owing to war conditions, proper food was scarce it was not remarkable that the need of a dispensary was great.

The Red Cross delegates had been warned that the

people of Bobigny were difficult to deal with and would not brook anything that savored of interference in their habits. In consequence no house-to-house canvass was made, but only a few carefully selected visits and every effort bent gradually to gain the confidence of the citizens. The effort was successful and many of those who were in trouble were soon coming to the delegates for advice; but perhaps the chief triumph of Red Cross diplomacy in this conservative little town was in winning permission to make a general medical inspection of the three hundred and fifty pupils of the girls' school.

The yearly birth rate in Bordeaux in 1913 was ten thousand and the mortality one thousand; in 1916 the birth rate had dropped to five thousand while the mortality continued the same. The figures indicated plainly the need of child-welfare work. Something of the kind was being carried on by the local authorities but they were hampered by lack of funds and personnel. The Red Cross decided to help the city cope with the situation and in 1918 it gave money for the maintenance of a children's ward in the hospital, *Maison de Santé Protestante*, and for its service of district nurses. It, also, after some negotiations, settled upon terms of coöperation with the *Crèche de la Bastide*; the whole title then became *Dispensaire Franco-Américaine*. This dispensary was situated in a poor quarter on the opposite side of the river from that occupied by the main part of the city. Though it had a population of seventeen thousand there had been practically no doctors in the neighborhood since the beginning of the war and the death rate had been exceptionally high.

Other assistance was given by the Red Cross, generally in the form of money grants such as those for establishing nursing scholarships and the one intended to serve as a nucleus for the foundation of a committee for the betterment of the milk supply of Bordeaux, there being plenty of room for improving conditions in this direction. On

January 1, 1919, the Red Cross in pursuance of its general policy, began to withdraw its units from civil relief work in the south and center of France including Bordeaux, but it agreed to continue the *Crèche de la Bastide* and an institution called the *Maison de Bébé* for some time longer, under French physicians, supplying each institution with one nurse for one year from the newly formed nursing association.

In the spring after the German drive upon Compiègne was broken Red Cross work was begun in the vicinity by the installation of several dispensaries, the first clinic being established at Verberie in the reoccupied district. This little town, together with Senlis, Coudon, and Compiègne, was ultimately given an excellent dispensary service which included education in hygiene as well as medical aid. It was all reconquered territory, more or less shattered by war, and naturally without doctors or any arrangements for the care of the sick, and the work of the Red Cross physicians and nurses was of great value in keeping up the courage and physical well-being of the people who were bravely beginning to return to their homes.

At Valence two dispensaries for refugees were maintained by the Red Cross which furnished the full equipment for both on the condition that after its withdrawal the work should be carried on by the *Croix Rouge*. When the Red Cross severed its connections with these activities in March, 1919, the French society automatically assumed all responsibility for their future guidance and continued the work with the aid of nurses trained by the American organization. At Dinard where another Red Cross dispensary was established for refugee children from Nancy and the vicinity the situation was complicated by two severe epidemics of mumps and measles, but the little colony of nine hundred was brought safely through its troubles. Its school life was continued as regularly as under normal conditions. One of the songs the scholars

learned to sing was a French translation of *The Star Spangled Banner*:

“Drapeau d’Indépendance,  
Emblem d’Espérance  
Au foyer de la Liberté,  
Flotte, flotte, étoile.”

Whenever a visitor appeared the voices of the youngest class would spontaneously ring out with these words, quite confident that its accomplishment was both striking and delicately flattering. The First Communion of one of the classes was made during its stay at Dinard and an affecting sight it was to see the sixty boys and sixty girls, in exile and far from their parents, march solemnly to the church to take upon themselves the religious duties of life. The Red Cross had clothed them all, the boys in corduroy suits and the girls in gray dresses with white collars, and as a fitting observance of the important day it had also provided a special breakfast and luncheon.

The Children’s Bureau of the Red Cross was chiefly responsible for the foundation of an interesting attempt at a solution of the problem of the war-orphan. The essential idea was that of a system of “placing out” of the young children in suitable homes grouped about a center from which proper medical supervision should be provided, made more effective by the help of *visiteuses d’hygiène*, and by the provision of playground activities, kindergarten or other forms of schooling where needed. As the children grew older, the plan involved the giving of vocational training through proper connection with good farm schools, some of the various kinds of vocational schools for girls, etc., and the establishment of special centers for the children during this process of vocational education.

A model “placing-out” system was established at Dun-sur-Auron, the funds for the foundation having been supplied by the Red Cross. A Franco-American society



known as the Argonne Association has been formed to continue the work. Such centers could be multiplied according to the need and the resources at hand. Plans for the system of vocational education are well under way. The Ministry of Agriculture is much interested in the scheme for agricultural training, and as farm schools are a well-established thing in France and agricultural labor is much in demand, this part should be easy to develop. There are many possibilities in the way of vocational training for girls also. The provision of centers for this extension of the placing out idea may become part of the activity of the Junior Red Cross. The whole plan seems to be a very feasible way of helping to solve the problem of the war orphans.

In all the work of the Children's Bureau the effort was made to combine and coördinate separate child-welfare activities and so far as possible to get them into close relation with public activities and municipal or departmental administration. France, like America, has harbored numbers of small private welfare organizations which may have their place in breaking ground for future government activity, or in filling in, temporarily, certain gaps; but any one familiar with any kind of public health work must realize that it can never be carried out successfully on a broad scale except under governmental auspices. It has been a particular aim of the Bureau to further such development in France. The French are rather inclined to distrust their own government, but the experience of Americans in the country has been that it is perfectly possible to work well with some of the municipal and departmental administrations, and each step in this line is an encouragement to further progress.

The Children's Bureau is leaving behind it a number of activities successfully operating under French management, all of which may be expected to prove of very considerable value in their particular localities. They have all been intended to represent as nearly as possible the



best and most recent developments in the particular kind of child-welfare activity involved, adapted to present French conditions. Child-welfare work has for some time been rather at a stand-still in France and in so far as these new activities are successful their chief service should be in stimulating and encouraging the growth of new work elsewhere. Evidence accumulates constantly that some of them are already having their effect and it seems reasonable to hope that as France emerges from the depression of the war and attacks her peace problems with renewed energy, the work of the Bureau will bring a harvest more than commensurate with the money and effort expended.

## CHAPTER XIII

### PROPAGANDA

A SECOND form of constructive work carried on by the Children's Bureau was that of educational propaganda, designed to arouse the interest of the people at large in the problems of child hygiene, and to stimulate and assist in the development of new work along these lines in places where good organization was lacking.

A very extensive educational campaign did not exactly lie within the province of the Red Cross whose first and foremost duty was to give as much emergency relief as possible to the children suffering from conditions brought about by the war. In so far as it could the organization combined the giving of relief with an educational service, using its dispensaries and hospitals as disseminating points for its attractive cards and pamphlets on child health and hygiene, and distributing a great quantity of similar material among the French societies whose constant requests for it gave ample evidence that it was appreciated. Such requests were not limited to France. Algiers, Salonica, Corfu, Serbia, and England asked for and received this Red Cross literature.

The attention of the French people, though as readily caught, perhaps, as that of Americans, is not so easily influenced by such impersonal publicity methods and the Red Cross saw the necessity of following up this literary campaign by practical demonstrations of the lessons it preached.

The Children's Bureau was functioning in France before the overseas' forces of the United States had reached large figures so that for a time its activities were more in

the nature of a diplomatic mission than a social service work. This was particularly true of the work in connection with the traveling expositions, which was the means chosen for calling the attention of the people more directly than could be done by posters and pamphlets, to the important facts of infant morbidity and mortality and the tuberculosis situation, together with the methods of value in meeting these problems.

These expositions were of two kinds: large exhibits, held in such cities as Lyon, St. Étienne, Toulouse, and Marseilles, and small portable ones, operated jointly with the Rockefeller Commission, which traveled through ten of the busy central Departments, showing at most of the principal towns. They were visited by great numbers of people and aroused much favorable comment, and it is to be expected that they will bear fruit in the future development of good work in the localities where they were held. Outside of the interest they aroused in child-welfare work they were of value in that they brought home to the people the true spirit of the United States and the significance of their co-operation in the war.

As a matter of fact many of the people were at that time skeptical as to the aims of America. German propaganda had been insiduously spread among the working classes and in many quarters had succeeded in arousing the belief that we meant to "Americanize" France; that the huge docks and warehouses and other constructions over which our engineers were laboring were intended less for the use of our army than as an entering wedge for our capitalists, who were seizing upon the entry of the United States into the war as a pretext for obtaining control of French industry.

This feeling was noticeable in such places as St. Étienne. The town with its surrounding cluster of smaller villages is a large industrial center and after the occupation of the North by the Germans it had become the most important mining community in France. It is an unattractive town

of belching chimneys and wooden factories most of which were engaged in manufacturing munitions. The seat of radical socialism and frequently the scene of troubles between capital and labor, it naturally was fertile soil for the German-made rumor that American dollars meant to invade France and capture her industrial opportunities.

Because of its factories refugees from the North were from time to time sent to St. Étienne, and the American Red Cross had delegates there to aid in receiving and caring for them till occupation could be found for them. The delegates had not come into contact with the radical socialistic element which up to the time of the arrival of the Children's Exposition were more or less fixedly of the opinion that the United States were seeking their own selfish ends.

It was not with the intention of combating this feeling that the Red Cross decided to hold a "Baby Show," as it was called by the personnel, in St. Étienne. The "*Exposition des Enfants*" had already been successfully given in Marseilles and Lyon, and St. Étienne, crowded with artisans and refugees, suggested itself as a point where a demonstration of child-welfare work would prove of value. Certain French people thought the contrary. They believed that these artisans would not prove receptive. "They are apathetic and distrustful," was their comment. "We have tried and have had no success." Nevertheless the Red Cross sent its unit which installed the paraphernalia of its "show" in the building where the labor unions and syndicates have their offices, the *Bourse du Travail*, popularly known as the "*boîte des grèves*," or nest of strikes.

To get in touch with the people the Red Cross representatives approached the Secrétaire Générale of the Bourse and the *Secrétaire Générale du Syndicat des Métallurgistes* who finally consented to take them before a meeting of the united *Syndicats Départementales de la Loire*, where they could present their cause. On the day agreed upon

the delegates were ushered into the council room, where around a huge table sat a number of workmen, the labor leaders of the Loire. One of the Red Cross delegates has vividly described the scene and the impression it made upon her. She had expected to find apathy and ignorance; she met a group of men marked by toil, roughly dressed and rough of manner almost to fierceness, but alert, keen-eyed, masterful. Her French friends had been right in one particular. These men were distrustful and resented the intrusion of the Red Cross into their affairs.

For a few minutes it seemed that the errand of the representatives was out of place in the determined gathering, which was apparently concerned only in plans for ending the war and establishing the brotherhood of all labor; but gradually its hostility changed to interest as it listened to the address of the delegate. She told them frankly how as an American accustomed to freedom of action and speech, she was hurt and surprised by their intolerance toward an organization which had come to them in all sincerity to ask assistance in an effort to ameliorate social conditions. Was it the spirit of the brotherhood of man, in which they so deeply believed, to stifle a genuine expression of the good-will of the American people? The Red Cross had come to them with a true desire to coöperate in the generous spirit of comradeship, as the representatives of one people should with representatives of another. Here was no charity but solidarity, no self-seeking but a disinterested desire to help a comrade in distress. Real fraternity had rarely been so strikingly expressed as in this work of war relief undertaken by the American Red Cross in France.

The interview was long and the arguments were not all on one side, but it ended satisfactorily. The gathering became as enthusiastic as it had been suspicious and every hard hand was extended in welcome to the delegate and to America when it understood at last the idealism and the unselfish strength of purpose back of all the Red Cross

effort. The representatives of the united *Syndicats* accepted the *Exposition des Enfants* as their own and issued proclamations advising all their members to visit it and give it support in every way. At the opening session the Mayor and Prefect, the clergy and the leaders of the Socialistic party, appeared on the same platform. To the citizens of St. Étienne this was almost as astonishing as the outbreak of the world war.

As an epilogue that was most gratifying the Red Cross unit received a personal request from the director of one of the largest factories in France employing about thirty thousand workers, begging it to bring the exposition to his town because in his opinion it had reached the working people as the organization which he represented had never been able to do and had thus succeeded in giving them a better understanding of America and her part in the war. He expressed his conviction that the coming of the Red Cross would tend greatly to improve the morale of the workers and be for the good of the whole town.

The *Exposition des Enfants* at St. Étienne was the third show on a large scale to be held by the Red Cross. The first had been opened at the progressive city of Lyon in April, 1918, where it had run for three weeks. The second took place soon after at Marseilles, the great cosmopolitan seaport of the Mediterranean. In no city of France are the conditions less favorable for children or the need for popular education in hygiene greater. In both these cities, but particularly in the latter, the Red Cross delegates found a complicated web of sectarian, political, and even racial interests contending with each other in almost every walk of life; but as in other activities of the Red Cross it came about that its members, working solely and unselfishly in the interests of general humanity, could bring these various elements together as no other agency might hope to.

Small exhibits were given in other towns as at Bourges,



and in the fall of the year a fourth large show took place at Toulouse. By this time the character of American intervention had been shown at Château-Thierry and St. Mihiel. Many American soldiers had passed through the city, and in the hospitals — Toulouse was a French hospital center — some of our men were lying as patients. The community did not have to be educated as to the good faith of America. For the first time in the history of the *Exposition des Enfants* it was possible for the personnel to confine all their efforts to the accomplishment of the primary purpose of the show, a demonstration of child-welfare work.

The *modus operandi* of the large expositions was practically the same, hence a description of that at Toulouse will suffice to cover all. Through the courtesy of the Mayor the Red Cross unit was given the use of the *Halles des Graines*, where the grain raised in the region is sold and samples of it exhibited, as at the Chicago Wheat Pit. Through the services of five Friends, lent to the *Exposition* by the Friends' Bureau, partitions were erected, flooring laid and platforms built and the bare structure transformed into a series of booths arranged around a central space that was used as a cinema hall. Visitors to the show had to pass through an improvised turnstile that was a triumph of Quaker ingenuity. With a little lumber, some burlap and a cyclometer a machine was fashioned that measured each person as he entered, and by a simple mathematical process kilometers were converted into people and thus the attendance for the day was ascertained.

Conveniently near the turnstile was the information desk where appointments were made for examination by the medical staff and information of a general nature given out. In the first booth was the dentist's chair, surrounded by posters graphically illustrating the proper care of the teeth and the results of neglect. The main object of interest was the work performed on the children by the Red

Cross dentist who cleaned the children's teeth and gave the mothers detailed instructions as to any dental work that might be necessary. When extraction was an immediate necessity it was done, but otherwise the dentist, as well as the other doctors connected with the *Exposition*, confined herself to diagnosis and instruction in preventive measures. Instead of there being any question of competition with the local medical profession the Red Cross doctors probably provided them with a large increase of practice by impressing upon parents the importance of having children medically treated.

The second booth was in charge of nose and throat specialists and in the third the children were examined for defects of posture and corrective exercises were prescribed. In another were given instructions in dietetics with illustrations of fireless cooking and the construction of simple iceless refrigerators. This was one of the busiest points of the show, for the anxious French mothers, not content with eagerly listening to the lectures, asked innumerable questions. Another exhibit that made a strong impression upon the people was that of the Rockefeller Tuberculosis Bureau, the ominous and regular flashes of whose red electric sign recorded with each flash the death from the "white plague" of a stated number of Frenchmen.

A model play-ground composed one popular exhibit and there was a very attractive kindergarten that interested many school teachers. In a mothers' rest-room celluloid dolls were used in demonstrating the proper way of washing a baby and putting it to bed. The dolls, by the way, were bathed so vigorously that it was necessary for the handy Quakers to rejoin them at the conclusion of the exposition. In the last booth, from nine to six, the children were given a complete physical examination after they had been undressed very much against their will. If anything was wrong with the little ones the examiner explained the trouble to their mothers and advised them as to the kind of specialist they ought to consult.

Finally in the cinema hall, the various points were summed up and emphasized by well-planned films that gave in an interesting way all sorts of lessons on health and hygiene.

The object of these expositions was not only to help the individuals who came into personal contact with the Red Cross workers, but also to stimulate the desire of the general public for organized effort for the welfare of children. An intelligent interest in such work has of course always existed in France, but continued action in social service is much more difficult to obtain in that country than in America whose citizens have the habit of public expression and coöperation. Social, political and religious interests in America are not such bars to team-work as they are among the French. The process of "getting together" is infinitely slower and more cumbersome in the latter country. It was hoped that a knowledge of how the United States had staged their child-welfare campaigns and what had been accomplished as a result of them would be of some encouragement to social workers in France.

There is little doubt that among the thousands who visited the Red Cross expositions many of the laboring classes received a new conception of the importance of giving young children a fair chance to acquire health. Incidentally they found themselves relinquishing some of their old vague ideas of America and forming others which were frequently expressed in the following fashion:

"We always knew America was a nation of wonderfully organized business, but we believed that all Americans were absorbed in the purely practical. We did not realize that they were so idealistic and that the idealistic and practical sides of their nature were so well-balanced that during the stress of war they could think of the France of to-morrow."

## CHAPTER XIV

### WAR ORPHANS

THE Guthrie Society, an American organization for the relief of French war orphans, had begun to function in 1916 at No. 28 rue de la Trémoille, Paris, and by the fall of the following year was assisting over eighteen thousand orphans. In view of the President's declaration concerning the absolute necessity of a concentration of administrative action in American relief work this society, in October, 1917, turned over its work, its funds, and its little pensioners to the greater organization, the American Red Cross.

At first the care of the eighteen thousand orphans to which the Red Cross had then fallen heir was placed in the hands of the Children's Bureau, which later on made a division of all the work relating to children, retaining control of all that was medical and passing on everything of a non-medical nature to a new bureau, the Bureau of War Orphans.

The "*Aide aux Œuvres*" was the point of contact between all the French Children's Societies, not doing strictly medical work, and the Red Cross. Most of these societies had stations in Brittany and Southwestern France, some occupying châteaux which their owners had lent for orphanages, but wherever possible the child and its mother were kept together. Many citizens had taken little orphans into their homes, but as the war continued it became increasingly difficult to place children in this way. The situation was critical at the time the Red Cross arrived in France. It was necessary to act quickly, and generously, and possibly some of the Red

Cross aid was given unscientifically, but the impression this immediate and lavish assistance made upon the French was of the greatest value. Certainly without such help the suffering among the destitute children would have been much greater.

For several years the school authorities of Paris had provided poor children with a luncheon for which a small fee was asked. Naturally the burdens of war occasioned an increase of poverty and the number of children who could not afford to pay for the luncheons grew steadily larger, to such a degree that a noticeable diminution of health was observed by the Red Cross physicians. Here was a promising field for the spread of tuberculosis, always prevalent in city slums and alarmingly so in those of Paris during the war. The Children's Bureau took hold of the situation and by making generous free donations of food for a year brought the health status of the children up to a marked extent. A medical examination at the beginning of the following term showed that such good results had been accomplished that it was not necessary to reopen the Red Cross school canteens. Similar canteens were established for short periods in one or two other cities.

One of the most interesting of the Bureau's activities was that which had to do with the "Stars and Stripes War Orphans." The war orphans' "adoption" plan sprang from a genuine bit of sentiment. From the very first there existed a pretty friendship between the American troops and the French children. At that period the youth of France were prepared to see a romantic hero in every doughboy and the glamor was not lessened when they found him what he really was, not much more than a boy, frank, full of fun, and always ready for anything in the way of a game. The children were the first to greet him at the dock when he landed and wherever he went they were always on hand to applaud him. A kind of freemasonry instantly arose between them and it was not long before boys who had run away from home or had become separated



from their parents in the devastated regions began to attach themselves to various American regiments in the rear areas, along the lines of communication, in the billeting areas behind the lines, and even in the front lines. The soldiers petted these little mascots and shared their food and blankets with them, and good-natured company tailors fitted them out with uniforms.

After a time the more thoughtful of the soldiers realized that to give them this sort of life was not the best return for the affection of their small friends and the plan of sending them to school was originated. A company of United States Engineers was the first unit to decide on this, and to raise contributions among the men to pay for the elementary education of their mascot.

In March, 1918, the *Stars and Stripes*, the official newspaper of the American forces in France, started a campaign for the so-called adoption of war-orphans by individual soldiers and groups of soldiers. This plan was welcomed so enthusiastically by the men that before long the originators found the work more than they could attend to and they asked the Red Cross to take care of the various and often complicated details of the adoption.

Five hundred francs was the amount set for the yearly maintenance of each child. The money was paid in four quarterly installments to the *Stars and Stripes* who turned it over to the Red Cross. That organization had its list of war orphans and it selected from among them those who were most in need of such assistance, sending the names and photographs and any details that might be of interest to the soldiers who wished to adopt a child. The soldiers themselves made the final selection from these data.

At the beginning more than one child from a family was permitted to have an American "god-papa" but the Red Cross finally realized that it was better to allow only one to be adopted. The first orphans were from those refugees who had been living in villages under bombard-



ment and for these the small donations from the soldiers furnished a very much needed relief. In some cases it meant the difference between some bread and butter and none at all. Later on another class of orphans was included in the plan, the children of the cities that had not been under fire, but whose fathers had been killed in the war. The addition of the adoption fund to what she might herself be earning made it possible for the poor mother to hold her family together and carry on an adequate standard of living. In special cases payments were made to fit the circumstances. If a widow needed capital with which to stock a small shop or to purchase implements for her garden or farm, the entire five hundred francs would sometimes be paid over in one lump sum.

During the first week of the *Stars and Stripes* campaign five children were adopted. Funds then began to pour in and by the fall the newspaper was encouraged to start a "Christmas drive." This was so successful that by the end of December money sufficient for nearly three thousand five hundred orphans had been received, not to mention a miscellaneous fund of several thousand francs, representing small amounts to be used in behalf of the children for any purpose that might be considered advisable. Money continued to come in after the drive was over and to handle it a Continuation Fund was created, to serve as a reserve for renewing the support of children after the first year by the original adopter or adopters.

Special donations of varying amounts were sent to this fund from time to time, frequently from returned soldiers, who found on reaching one of the demobilization camps in the United States that they still had a few francs in their pockets.

Some months ago the Paris edition of the *Chicago Tribune* gave all of its profits made during the war to General Pershing to be used as he saw fit to decide. The Commander-in-Chief presented the one hundred and fourteen

thousand francs to the Comrades-in-Service, an organization then being launched among the members of the A. E. F. On the disbanding of this society it turned over the considerable portion of the fund left to the *Stars and Stripes* War Orphan Fund and the amount, approximately eighty-five thousand francs, was added to the Continuation Fund. The *Stars and Stripes* itself sent a memorial to the Congress of the United States requesting that the profits which arose from the publication of the paper in France should be placed at the disposal of the little French orphans. So far the sum of two million one hundred and eighty-four thousand, six hundred and forty francs has been received from the army and a few other sources, every centime of which goes to the children, the American Red Cross meeting all the administration expenses.

The plan was at first received with some lack of cordiality by mothers and wives in America, who misunderstood the situation, expecting that a flood of small children would accompany the troops home after the war, but as a matter of fact the French Government was quite opposed to the carrying away of children from the country. The arrangement was merely a temporary one.

The children were extremely proud of being adopted by American soldiers and did their small best to show their affection and gratitude, sending them little gifts, such as socks knitted by their own hands, or chestnuts they had gathered, besides photographs and many letters. It was the aim of the *Stars and Stripes* to encourage the soldiers and their wards to write to each other. The photographs of the children and their translated letters were always posted on the company's bulletin board. The mothers also wrote frequently describing how the children, since their adoption, were always striving for excellent marks in their studies and in their general conduct trying to conform to the standards they knew their American godfathers would approve.

The following are sample letters from two little war orphans:

*“ Dear Godfather:*

“ When my father left for the war, he said to me: ‘ My son, I shall be gone for a long time perhaps. You must write to me often.’ I did not forget to write to father. I was happy when his answers came, and so was mother, and my sisters and my brother too. One day there was no answer to my letter,— my father never answered me.

“ You have been good enough to take pity upon me, and to send mother the money father would have earned for me.

“ You are to me somewhat like my father, and I love you. That is why I wish to please you and to write to you as I would write to my father.

“ I preferred to read his letters and to write to him, rather than to go out to play.

“ I shall do just the same with you, because my heart tells me to.

“ I send you my best love.

“ ALEXANDER TUTIN.”

*“ Dear good Godfathers:*

“ I want to tell you at once, how happy and proud I am to be your little ward. Mother already talked to me about you before this, when we received your kind letter and the generous gift enclosed. We were just having dinner with my sisters and — I do think mother cried for joy, when telling us the good news. On the morrow, I told all my school-fellows about it; the teacher even read aloud the letter from the American Red Cross and everybody cheered and shouted, ‘ Hurrah for America,’ Here, I am very far away from the war, but father went there and never came back. Our teacher says, you have come to avenge him, so I tell you twice; — thank you, once for father and once for me.

"I live with mother, my grandfather and my sisters in a little village in the Alps. Father was a smith in that village but now the shop is abandoned and it is very sad. If such is your wish, we shall have a chat together every month. Tell me when you will be fighting, and I shall pray for you. Tell me also, how many you are and will you write all your names in 'American?'"

"Good-by, dear Godfathers, I love you from the bottom of my little French heart.

"LOUIS JEANNOT ALPHAND."

It was evident that the interest of the soldiers in the plan was not wholly broken off by their return to the United States, for many renewed their subscriptions after their demobilization and others wrote asking about the welfare of the orphans which they or their units had adopted.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE WHITE PLAGUE

“**M**ONSIEUR LE DIRECTEUR:

“Thank you with all our hearts for the generous inspiration you have had to send to us, poor patients of the Hospital — a great number of your favors. Oh, how sensitive we are of the strong feeling you have to desire to better the situation of the most modest but saddest victims of the war by giving to us the greater part of your work and resources.

“We, soldiers of France, Monsieur le Directeur, have not only courage and stability, we have also children’s hearts open to all affection shown to us. We resemble the fruit of which the appearance does not always predict the flavor. We are not of these glorious wounded and our hospitalization has not the noble origin we would have wished — one which calls for help by visible scars. We are irreducible fighting men — on the battlefield — but conquered by sickness. We are the most to be pitied, and you come to us because of this motive.

“Débris of the army, we shall not have the honor of doing our bit to the end of this common task and we shall not pass under the *Arc de Triomphe* after the Victory, but we call for this day with all our soul and we are proud to have sacrificed for this — our lives.

“We address to you, Monsieur le Directeur, with our most sincere gratitude, our best wishes for you and your devoted associates, also the subscribers of this patriotic and meritorious work of the American Red Cross.”

In 1917 there were thousands of French soldiers dis-

abled by tuberculosis and almost all of them, like the writer of the above letter, were convinced that they had contracted the disease in the trenches. As a matter of fact the majority were tainted before the war and were therefore not entitled to a pension, which added to the wretchedness of their lot. The Government had made some provisions to alleviate the misery of these unfortunates and had drawn up a comprehensive plan that was expected to take care of every case by 1919. At the period when the American Red Cross began to function in France a large number were still in need of hospital facilities and proper food. Moreover this was only one aspect of the situation and except from the point of view of military expediency, perhaps the least important.

Tuberculosis, always rife throughout France, had during the last twenty years cost the country nearly a million lives taken chiefly at the military age. In Paris and the other cities having a population of over twenty thousand inhabitants the death rate was more than twice that of New York City from the same cause, and the difference is made more striking when one considers the taller buildings and much less open character of New York.

In spite of these conditions France had never made any serious nation-wide attempt to deal with tuberculosis before the war. Neither the hospitals nor the physicians were compelled to report it to the sanitary authorities and practically the only special provision for its treatment had been made by private initiative. There had been almost no anti-tuberculosis propaganda.

As is well known tuberculosis is difficult to diagnose, and it is so insidious that many cases become infectious at a period unknown to themselves, but by a general and systematic campaign England and America have greatly lessened the mortality from this disease, in some communities as much as sixty per cent in the last thirty years. Educating the masses in the simple methods of warding off the evil and treating it in its first stages has



been one of the first and most important steps in the anti-tuberculosis campaign of the two countries.

The French Government and the French people seemed in the main not only indifferent to this situation, but also to the lack of adequate health legislation, organization, and administration. Apparently something was needed to rouse them to an appreciation of the fact that the public health situation was far from what it should be. This the war succeeded in doing.

The mobilization of the male population and the subsequent hardships of the trenches revealed in a way that could not be ignored the extent to which tuberculosis was fastening itself upon the nation. Health conditions among the displaced civil population were worse than in the army. There were several reasons for this. The refugees, the repatriés, and the returning prisoners, all had undergone privations and were in the main in poor physical condition. Many of them were already tainted with the disease and these rapidly became hopelessly ill. Owing to the difficulty of securing adequate housing their temporary quarters were frequently overcrowded, sometimes several families occupying one room. Thus the disease found unusual opportunities to spread.

What with her own displaced people and the great influx of foreign troops and war laborers of one kind or another the population of the uninvaded portions of France had increased by about eight millions. Her cities and villages were congested, food was high and scarce, particularly that required by infants and invalids, and better wages had resulted in a larger consumption of alcohol which "makes the bed for tuberculosis."

The expert sent to France by the Rockefeller Foundation in February, 1917, to investigate the tuberculosis situation, said in his report: "There is no health problem with which I am familiar or with which I have even come in contact which it seems to me offers a broader or more useful field of activity for the Rockefeller Foundation than

this one; nor is there anywhere a more fruitful field of usefulness or one in which a greater contribution can be made to the benefit of the human race."

In July, 1917 the Rockefeller Foundation sent a working commission to France to apply there, so far as possible, the anti-tuberculosis methods which had proved so successful in the United States. The American Red Cross created its Bureau of Tuberculosis in August of the same year and the two organizations coöperated in the fight against the disease.

A tuberculosis program can be stated briefly as follows: An adequate dispensary system to search out the disease. A dispensary system operates at the hand of reasonably well-equipped diagnosticians, and examines the material brought to it by the diligent search of visiting nurses. Past experience has shown that in large communities particularly, practically ninety per cent of the tuberculosis problem is located by the system while ten per cent is located by general practicing physicians.

Given a perfect and complete dispensary system, there is presented such an immense problem that for economic reasons, only a fraction of this disease problem can be treated.

There are two points to be considered in the treatment: 1—The isolation of advanced and dangerous cases which are a very frequent source of infection to their children and families. 2—The proper treatment of cases that have the chance to ameliorate their condition or to recover.

Given the discovery of the total disease problem, it is possible to treat or even to isolate but a small fraction of the total problem. Perfection in treatment and isolation is now considered as twenty per cent of the total disease problem.

To illustrate concretely therefore in France, approximately four hundred to eight hundred dispensaries are to-day necessary. Less than one hundred exist. One hundred and five thousand treatment beds, to be divided

between hospitalization and sanatoria, are needed. A little more than twelve thousand exist.

The first step the Red Cross took was a quick inspection of all the tuberculosis hospitals that could be reached in the various Departments, a step which enabled it to understand the numerous excellent projects that had been planned but had been suspended because of war conditions. As a result the first needs of the moment received attention such as, to single out a few for special mention, the activities at Bligny, Tournay-Charente, Montbron, and Aspet. Later on a second and more deliberate visit was made that left the Red Cross very well informed as to the general situation and the plans made by the French to ameliorate it.

Red Cross assistance sometimes took the form of money contributions, at others furnishings, clothing, food, medicines and recreation. The last item included the installation of recreation rooms which, owing to the type of institution and the initial over-crowding, usually did not exist; the repair and sometimes the complete equipment of these, and the provision of games, toys, and additions to the libraries. Frequently there were no facilities for taking outdoor cure in inclement weather so that it was impossible for the patient to get away from his bed, and when such improvements could be speedily and economically made cure-galleries or porches were installed by the Red Cross.

The Commission for the Prevention of Tuberculosis in France, sent over by the Rockefeller Foundation, had decided to establish two demonstration centers, one in a large city where the problem of congestion and poverty would be plainly presented, the other in some rural district that would be representative of average conditions in the French provinces. For the civic center the nineteenth Arrondissement of Paris was finally selected while the Department of Eure-et-Loir was chosen for the rural demonstration. The four chief cities of the Department of

Eure-et-Loir, which has a normal population of two hundred and seventy-two thousand people, are Chartres, Dreux, Châteaudun, and Nogent. The Commission created a system of dispensaries with visiting nurses in each of the first three. Dispensary extensions were established in the smaller communal towns which were reached by automobile. The Red Cross lent a physician to each of the dispensaries and supplied the entire relief of the dispensary organization created by the Commission in this Department, and in the nineteenth Arrondissement in the city of Paris as well.

The excellent Hospital St. Joseph in Paris had purchased a property for seven hundred and fifty thousand francs and was about to fit the building up for the care of one hundred and fifty advanced cases of tuberculosis. The cost of the repairs, two hundred and fifty thousand francs, was the extent of their resources. The Red Cross saw here an opportunity to perfect the contemplated plans and make a contribution to the permanent equipment against the disease in Paris and with this idea it offered the hospital the additional three hundred and twenty-five thousand francs needed to carry out the improvements it suggested. To Bligny Sanatorium at Bligny, Seine-et-Oise, the Red Cross gave the sum of four hundred and thirty-six thousand francs. This sanatorium is the creation of the *Œuvre des Sanatoriums Populaires de Paris*, a private society which has established one of the best public sanatoriums in France.

At the outbreak of the war its two main buildings for two hundred and sixty patients were requisitioned for military purposes. There was under construction an additional building with a capacity of three hundred. Among the dependencies of this building was a nurses' home and a nurses' training school built along excellent lines. The new building for patients was about half finished in the summer of 1914. Materials were on the ground and all facilities available for carrying forward one-half of the

work toward completion. This was considered a wise activity for the Red Cross to assist as it would place into function, with a little crowding, three hundred permanent beds. The building when completed was occupied by French military tuberculous. At the close of the war it was returned to the authorities for the care of the civilian tuberculous of Paris.

Two hundred thousand francs were appropriated to *Sanatorium Lege*, destined to be the departmental sanatorium of the Gironde. A large amount of money had been collected and the buildings already begun, but it was found that the sum on hand was not sufficient and there was danger of the project being abandoned when the Red Cross supplied the deficit.

Two hundred thousand francs were appropriated to the *Société de Secours aux Blessés Militaires*, being added to the fund of one hundred and fifty thousand francs of this organization, for the purchase of a property for a departmental sanatorium in the Indre-et-Loire. It was provided in the gift that the function of this institution should be for the departmental needs and that it should become a unit of the departmental machinery for the control of tuberculosis in the Indre-et-Loire.

Cash contributions of lesser amounts were given to various activities but in no case did Red Cross contributions equal fifty per cent of the total cost of the project, in many instances the appropriations being as low as one or two per cent of the total cost of the work. In certain regions it was not feasible for the Red Cross to enter with its personnel because of the military situation. To supplement existing tuberculosis work in these regions small cash donations were made.

The Red Cross coöperated with the Commission for the Prevention of Tuberculosis in France in an educational anti-tuberculosis campaign, which concerned itself with the French civilian population, and in which the people were particularly interested as it was their first acquaintance



with anything of the kind. The method followed was to send out through the departments specially equipped automobiles with lecturers, moving pictures, literature, newspaper articles, and posters. It required from two to three months for one of these camions to accomplish its work in a Department.

On November 10, 1917, the country estate known as "Hachette," located at Plessis-Robinson, ten kilometers south of Paris, was turned over to the Bureau of Tuberculosis for the operation of a tuberculosis unit for civilian and refugee women and children of the Paris district. It was the largest unit undertaken by the Bureau and was named "Trudeau" as a compliment to the pioneer of French origin in tuberculosis work in America. The installation was well adapted to the needs, but was temporary and was abandoned after the war. The property was returned to the Department of the Seine who proposes to use it for a Garden City, one of the nine such institutions that have been planned. Each will be approximately one hundred and sixty acres, and each will correspond to a sector of the city of Paris. It is the hope of the authorities to remove from each sector of Paris a certain per cent of the population for installation in small houses of modern type in these nine "gardens" and by this means to establish modern villages and at the same time to disperse the population of Paris, particularly that part which is not able to disperse itself.

The repatriés coming back from the invaded region through Switzerland arrived at the rate of about one thousand a day at Evian when convoys were coming through. The practice of returning citizens from the repatriated regions having been mutually agreed upon by France and Germany, all such persons were systematically returned with the exception of the able-bodied of both sexes. The men were held as prisoners of war and the able-bodied women as workers. The convoys, therefore, consisted for the most part of women in poor health, or



with large families of children, and of the aged of both sexes. The percentage of tuberculosis among them was occasionally quite high — often varying from thirty to sixty-five per thousand. Many repatriés returning through Evian were in no mental state to carry out the impersonal demands of health or hygiene. It was usually impossible to separate a tuberculous mother from her family whatever that family might consist of. A certain number of cases arose where it was possible to take care of the whole family unit by placing the children in a children's hospital and the tuberculous mother in a hospital, pending the re-uniting of the family.

It was for this purpose that one hundred and eighty beds for women were opened by the Bureau at St. Genis Laval near Lyon. The hospital was repaired, minor equipment added, staffed and the deficit of operation paid. The work was extended and dispensary assistance was given in Lyon by the administrative staff.

The tuberculosis work of the Red Cross in Blois consisted in the operation of a dispensary and small sanatorium, but the effort was of more than usual interest as it was the first work undertaken in the provinces. It was based upon the previous four years' interest of an active American who directed attention to the opportunity. A dispensary was equipped, a physician and nurse were installed, seven hundred and seventy-five patients received attention, and seventy-five families received assistance in the homes and the work has progressed to such a point that its legitimate expansion throughout the Department will be a matter of easy accomplishment provided the necessary funds are forthcoming.

It is of interest to record here that of the total money expended in this dispensary endeavor, four-fifths came from French sources and but one-fifth from the Red Cross. The tuberculosis effort in Blois and the results obtained illustrate to what extent the program may be realized by the

activity of a few interested people properly supported in their endeavors.

Before tuberculosis organization was effected in the United States Army, the Red Cross offered it a one hundred bed hospital for the care of cases that could not be transported to America. The changing medical activities of the army called for four centers for the preliminary care of the tuberculous soldier preparatory to his discharge for America, but the offer of the Red Cross was accepted and the hospital ultimately made to function. The Red Cross further coöperated with the army in the preparation of plans for the sanatorium to be located at Base Hospital No. 8 and in the matter of tuberculous education among the troops.

Out of a population of about four millions and a half Serbia lost during the war one million and a half through emigration. Some twenty thousand Serbian refugees came to France and her near by colonies, a large number of whom were students and young collegiates. Their condition was bad and their resources extremely limited. The question of their relief was presented to the Red Cross in the fall of 1917, and thoroughly investigated during the ensuing winter. The needs of these exiles was found to be so urgent that the organization approved a total budget of one million francs to be devoted to their relief. As its share the Bureau of Tuberculosis contributed four hundred beds for those suffering from tuberculosis and established several canteens in the large centers to assist the four thousand young Serbs to obtain a daily ration that would not drop below the minimum normal. In addition a few delegates were placed in the field whose mission it was to give special attention to the smaller groups.

To sum up the activities of the Bureau of Tuberculosis it attempted to do the following things:

First: To bring regular relief in the way of food,

clothing, medical supplies, treatment facilities and recreation to twenty-five thousand consumptives. It supplied the entire relief of the dispensary organization created by the Rockefeller Commission in the Department of Eure-et-Loire and in the nineteenth Arrondissement in the city of Paris.

Second: To assist in the maintenance of beds that were destined for the treatment of tuberculosis either of hospital or sanatorium type. It functioned more than twenty-six hundred such beds. Similarly it assisted tuberculosis dispensaries in the same manner. The great principle upon which it operated, as the Bureau was concerned chiefly with hospitalization factors, was not only the establishment of new beds which were very much needed, but also the avoidance of the mixing of tuberculosis patients in the general medical wards of the general hospitals throughout France.

The Bureau discovered an admitted twelve hundred mixed cases in the general hospitals of France. Reorganization of these hospitals with the establishment of isolation pavilions would practically institute another twelve thousand beds at comparatively little cost. Intimate propaganda has been carried on in two important centers to bring this about and it is now in general in a fair way of acceptance.

As minor activities, the Bureau assisted in the amelioration of the existing treatment facilities in many tuberculosis hospitals and created, by finance outright, two hundred permanent beds that have been wholly paid for.

## CHAPTER XVI

### GOING BACK

ONCE upon a time America had its frontier families who, breaking away from the main settlements, scattered themselves like fruitful seeds over an unknown country. These groups were composed in a sense of picked individuals. They were not home lovers, but nomads, restless of spirit, full of courage and strength, preferring the hardships of a free, wild life to the quiet comforts of towns and villages. The idea that the new world held somewhere a fortune for them was firmly fixed in their minds, as was the resolution not to wait for it to turn up but to cut a short way to it. The country teemed with fish and game and the men were trained hunters or soon became such, so that it was seldom there was not meat for the pot. The wives were little inferior to their husbands in pluck and adaptability and the children were as healthy and vigorous and as much in tune with their strenuous life as young Indians.

After a fashion the returning refugees resembled these early frontier families. They were — and are still for that matter — going into territory that is familiar, but whose old civilization has been almost wiped out and where in the majority of cases life has to be begun afresh under conditions little better than those encountered by the American pioneers. In some respects their situation is not so favorable. The open camp of the pioneer was more hygienic than the dugouts, cellars, and ruined dwellings in which the refugee shelters himself, and his whole mode of life was healthier, his food heartier, his prospects more alluring. But in making any such comparison one vital

difference is at once obvious. The refugees are physically as unfit as the pioneers were fit. The strong among them have been culled and the weak left to carry on the burdens of life.

The spirit of the refugees is quite as dauntless as that which animated the pioneers. They are not ignorant of the conditions they have to face and they realize their lack of youth and strength, but that does not hold them back. When all the troops are demobilized the men folk will be hurrying into the devastated regions to do their share, but there are thousands of homes to which no men will return. In the meantime one can do something so long as one is not a helpless cripple. And the old people feel quite ready to cut a little short the span of life that still remains for them so long as they can die near their own homes and lie in the family cemeteries.

Some of those who have means are as much attached to the soil as those who, before the German invasion came, had never been able and never wished to leave it. There are men and women to whom the loss of their châteaux is of small importance from a financial point of view, who have returned to live among the ruins in little wooden barracks during the heat of the summer. The owner of one of the finest modern châteaux in France is living to-day in a two-room bungalow in what was once a beautiful garden on a terraced slope. Four years ago there were few views more delightful than the one commanded from this slope, but now the countryside is one wide panorama of desolation as if it had been scourged by a kind of leprosy that had pitted and eaten the soil and reduced the woodlands to thin groups of dry gray skeletons. Of the village below, once such a warm, significant feature of the landscape, one can distinguish merely a pale rough patch like a half-healed wound. The village will never rise from its ashes for its whole surroundings are so hopelessly war-torn as to be unfit for human occupation, and the Government has decided to transfer its name to a new site.



The château is a huge heap of stones, scattered about and mixed with the churned-up earth. The fruit trees are cut down, the gardens gashed with trenches and shell-craters of great depth. Near one of them lies a huge unexploded shell bearing the French stamp, one of the iron flock that brought ruin to this splendid property. The Germans were in possession and the artillery officer who knocked the château about their ears and razed every tree or trench is the man living in the little hut on the edge of the garden. With his own guns he destroyed his home so thoroughly that not even a rabbit could find refuge there, and the feeling uppermost in his mind seems to be one of pride in the efficiency with which he did his work.

There are many others like him, titled members of the aristocracy, who have come back to live with and help the returning people. Their coöperation has aided the American Red Cross to a wise and just distribution of its relief stores, and their share of the partnership has been the active work behind counters, receiving the long queues of refugees, taking their names and their wants, investigating their circumstances, handing out supplies, keeping the accounts, visiting the sick, giving advice and assistance everywhere. The presence of these people has had an excellent influence upon the villagers who, in spite of their supposedly republican standards, look up with considerable veneration to the grand seigneur.

The curé is another power among the French. His rule is mild but nevertheless effective, and he is more than a priest; he is a practical man with a wise eye for the material interests as well as the souls of his parishioners. In him the people know they have a champion of their rights, a man whose education and standing enable him to have access to the authorities; who will see that they are not overlooked or put aside.

Like the physician, the curé has been to the war and was in the thick of it. The old ones who could not go have returned to their villages, in most cases ahead of their



flocks. The Red Cross has found some of these aged men working all alone among the ruins of their churches, salvaging bits of material out of which to make a temporary house of worship, and living on next to nothing in the meanwhile. But if the curé comes some of his people are sure to follow quickly. He is a point around which to rally. So also is the mayor, who has more than the mere political importance so often the main asset of similar dignitaries in America. Home life and village life mean everything to the Frenchman who seldom interests himself in matters outside of these circles, and given the curé and the mayor, voilà! there one has the essential and pregnant nucleus of village life.

One must have seen the devastated regions of France in order to form a just conception of the ruin war left in its wake. Some smooth and smiling areas still remain, but the centers of life, the towns and hamlets, the farms and factories and mines no longer exist. War systematically concentrated upon these points all its destructive powers and blotted them out. So furious and thorough was the work that even the land they occupied is in many cases wrecked beyond repair, its once productive soil slashed with thousands of miles of trenches, pitted with millions of over-lapping craters, buried beneath upheaved tons of unfertile chalk and clay and gravel. Orchards were deliberately hewn down, or cut to pieces by storms of missiles. Where there were valuable forests only stumps and bleached skeletons of trees stand to-day. Canals and railroads were wrecked; bridges blasted into heaps of twisted steel and broken stones; telephone and telegraph lines swept away as if they were cobwebs; sewers, water-systems, wells, ruined beyond repair. Cattle, horses, sheep, poultry, every living creature of any economic value was killed or carried off. This extensive region, formerly so populous and prosperous, was reduced to a condition little superior to that antecedent to its occupation by man.

The Government has begun to put workmen into the devastated regions and to-day directs a force of three hundred thousand peaceful moppers-up who are removing from the land the tangled webs of barbed wire and the dangerous litter of unexploded shells and hand-grenades, and filling up the miles of trenches and the countless shell-holes. Two hundred and seventy-five thousand acres of this land, however, are beyond restoration, at least without the expenditure of more money than they could be made to return. One big section lies around the towns of Albert, Lens, and La Bassée. Another, running through the Chemin-des-Dames region, stretches along just east of the Hindenburg Line, while a third is situated southeast of Nancy. The Government plans to buy these areas of no-man's land from the original owners for purposes of forestation, and some of the battle-scarred areas will bear woods of American birth, for many thousand little pine seedlings have been sent to France as gifts from our country.

After the signing of the armistice on November 11, the Red Cross shifted the field of its refugee relief activities. It withdrew its personnel from the center and south of France, leaving supplies in its warehouses sufficient for the French societies to carry on during the months of January and February, and concentrated all its efforts along the line in the devastated regions where, as the displaced population were then returning in large numbers, the need of assistance was naturally the greatest. All the civilian work done in these regions, instead of being more or less independently performed by the zone delegates as heretofore, was consolidated and administered completely by the Department of General Relief in Paris. Warehouse headquarters were established at various central points from which the Red Cross stocks of food, clothing, bedding, tools, etc., were given out to the French officials and societies for distribution among the people.

Of the Red Cross plans for its final work the Director of

the Department of Civil Affairs made the following statement:

“The armistice and approaching end of the war is demobilizing French resources and the work of the American Red Cross is becoming less essential to France. Men are returning from the army to start normal lives which will enable them to again support their families. (The French soldier has a daily wage of about five cents a day, in addition to the allocation of thirty cents a day paid to his wife and twenty cents a day paid to his children under fifteen.) French physicians will be demobilized and enabled to care for civilians; labor is freed to cultivate the land, to man the factories which produce necessities, to help resolve the tangle of transportation into which military needs have tied the railroads at times.

“The American Red Cross is endeavoring to see the most needy classes of French civilians — the refugees — through the winter months, and to carry to the devastated regions goods which will aid in the reestablishment of normal living in what is now a desert. With that done, it will feel that its civilian workers can leave France with the assurance that they have done their share on the second line defense — a line where battles often have been only slightly less bitter and less agonizing than on that first line where all attention has been concentrated for four years and a half.”

As a result of the policy outlined above, the Department of General Relief on January 1, 1919, included:

The Bureau of the Liberated Zone.

The Bureau of Emergency Relief.

The Bureau of War Orphans (*Stars and Stripes* Fund), while under the Medical and Surgical Department the activities of the Children's Bureau were continued until April 1st, and those of the Bureau of Tuberculosis until May 1st.

It was planned to close the seven warehouses of the Liberated Zone by July 1, but it was expected that the distribu-



# GOING BACK

All that was left of "home" for many of the Poilus after the war was over and victory had been won.





tion of the Red Cross stock of supplies in the devastated area extending from the North Sea to Switzerland would go on for at least two months more, the responsibility for such distribution being placed upon the French relief committees.

After the armistice the tide of refugees set all one way. Those who for obvious reasons could not do so before this time began to move homeward. In many cases there was absolutely nothing for them to return to save the scarred land itself. There was no shelter for them nor any means of earning a living, but in spite of the protest of the authorities they insisted on going back. The farmers had the best prospects. There were always bits of ground on which crops could be raised, if seeds and a few agricultural implements could be had. The Germans had taken care not to leave anything of the kind behind. What they had not taken away they had destroyed. Farming on an extensive scale was of course impossible, but the American Red Cross and other relief societies made provisions to supply the man or woman who wished to cultivate small plots with seeds and simple tools.

The first thought of these people was to get to work on the land. Anything in the shape of a dwelling house was a secondary consideration. They contented themselves with the most crude and often unhealthy habitations, which were neither wind nor rainproof and devoid of furnishings of any kind. Living without mattresses, on beds of boards or heaps of stale straw, was not good for these old people, particularly as they had too much work to do and too little to eat. It was work indeed for younger, more vigorous arms, but the strong men of the country were either in the army or lying in their war graveyards.

Some of the refugees had been able to take a cow, a horse, or a few goats with them when they left their villages. These as a rule had not gone far from the War Zone, but had camped as close to it as was possible, leading a kind of gypsy existence until the retreat of the Ger-



mans had enabled them to return. With some livestock life was not so hard, but the great majority had none. The fact that cows were particularly scarce made it difficult to provide proper food for the little children. The Prefects of the various Departments warned the refugees of this and many left their children in the care of the Red Cross or some of the numerous French orphanage societies. Others persisted in taking them with them and these would have fared badly if the relief associations had not taken special pains to see that they were supplied with milk or other suitable nourishment.

Often the land was so thickly strewn with grenades and unexploded missiles of all kinds that it had to be cleared with the greatest care before agricultural operations could be begun. In some of the worst districts the Government undertook to do this, but the people would not always wait for slow-moving officialdom. When the children did return with their mothers or relatives they were a source of anxiety for they could not be left without a guard as there was danger everywhere.

One of the first and most important needs of the refugees was for schools. Some of the children had not been to school for five years. The Frenchman believes in education and he wants his children to make up for the time they have lost. Moreover while in school the children would be under the teacher's eye and the parents could work on their plots of ground without anxiety. Here and there teachers are returning and the Government is trying to meet such cases by the construction of simple buildings, but progress along this line will be necessarily slow for some time to come.

Cows that had been worth five hundred francs before the war cost five times that amount after the armistice. Some heifers were imported from Switzerland, but few individuals could afford to buy them, and clubs were formed, one cow being bought by several families and used in common, and they were glad to get them even on such

terms. An experiment with Brittany cattle was not much of a success for these little cows when turned into the rich pastures of their new homes promptly put on so much fat that they gave almost no milk. It will be a long time before the dairy industries of the devastated regions can be reestablished.

The smaller animals are easier to obtain and the Red Cross has supplied flocks of sheep, hens and ducks, and quantities of rabbits, which are one of the mainstays of the French peasant family. Yet though they have many pressing needs the agriculturists are in general better off than the factory hands and those who gained their living by some form of work other than that connected with farming operations. These refugees have absolutely nothing to go back to, yet thousands of them have returned and there were other thousands that never left their towns, but were held by the Germans up to the last moment, like the spinners of Lille.

When they saw victory slipping out of their grasp the Germans were resolved not merely to cripple but to kill the industries of this busy section of France. Their most furious efforts at destruction were perhaps directed against the metallurgic industries. The forges, foundries, and factories of Denain, Anzin, and other cities were first looted of every machine, tool, or product, finished or unfinished, and then razed to the ground. The *bassins* of Briey and Longwy, taken by the Germans in 1914, were so wrecked that three years will be required to put them in pre-war condition.

It will be from three to five years before the coal mines of Lens can be made to produce again. Every one knows how they were flooded. The Germans ordered the miners to cease work, leaving three hundred horses underground where, in spite of the appeals of their masters, they were left to die of thirst and hunger. This cruel deed accomplished, the tubing was blown up and the water allowed to flow into the excavations until they were completely filled.

And the ruined mines of Lens represent only one-fifth of the total destruction in the coal fields.

In Cambrai, Armentières, Halluni, and Roubaix the cambric and linen manufactories were wrecked beyond repair, the finest machines carried away into Germany, the rest broken up into scrap-iron and the buildings blown up. The curtain factories of Saint-Quentin met the same fate. Not only the factories, but the towns in which they stood were reduced to heaps of stones and ashes. All of the numerous large sugar factories around Amiens and Arras, with their complicated iron-work and bloated tanks, sprawl over the ground like huge burnt, dismembered spiders. The Germans took a good deal of pains to smash these structures thoroughly, for they make beet sugar themselves.

In its way the situation at Rheims seems quite as hopeless as at Lens as the city is much bigger. Though many of the houses are standing, they are only roofless, empty shells, their walls too cracked and loosened to serve as units in any scheme of repairs. Most of them must come down to be rebuilt from the foundations. The mere preparatory work of cleaning up the acres of heavy rubbish will require an enormous outlay of money and time. The water systems of none of these towns exist; the reservoirs are blown up and the mains cut and crushed in hundreds of places. The wells of hundreds of hamlets have been filled up, or poisoned with decaying animal matter and other substances, so that the refugees who have returned are not infrequently three or four miles away from the nearest water that can safely be used. Every drop they drink has to be carried that distance, usually by hand.

The physical character of such industrial centers as Lille, where the Germans settled early in the war and held possession for a long time, did not suffer such blighting changes as did those towns over which the waves of war passed and repassed. Here and there houses were demolished and many received severe injuries, but to the

casual view the streets and the buildings look about the same as usual. It was the interiors of the houses and factories that suffered, especially the latter. The Germans carried out their looting system — one can call it nothing less than a system — most efficiently at Lille, the industrial importance of which has long been a thorn in their sides.

Their spinning-machine experts followed the troops and inspected every workshop and factory from roof to basement. On all the machines that were modern or of special value to the German trade a warning that they were not to be damaged was placed. When military conditions became such that transportation was less congested these marked machines were shipped to the Fatherland and set up in German factories where they are running to-day. This large scale looting was performed in a leisurely fashion and pains were taken not to injure the machines in transit. Those not considered worth taking were broken up for their brass or copper parts and the rubber on their rollers. All the leather belting of the factories was stolen, all the brass piping and even the brass door-knobs of private houses. The sledge hammers and cold-chisels of the Germans were busy for many weeks in the work of destruction. When it was done they could say with truth that Lille, as an industrial rival, was crippled for many years to come.

One thing Lille still has and that is her dwellings, but without the business upon which her inhabitants depended for their living, her advantage in this respect is slight. Can she keep her citizens until the factories are re-fitted and supplied with new stores of raw materials and coal? To replace the stolen and scrapped machines and tools will require an expenditure three or four times larger than the pre-war price of such material and, what is of almost greater moment, it will take a long time, for the articles that Lille needs for the reestablishment of her trade are not in stock.

These are some of the problems that face the people

of the devastated regions. The industrial worker may or may not have a roof over his head, but in the majority of cases he has no occupation. The agriculturist may have a bit of land he can cultivate, but his home is a heap of stones.

War indemnities may in part remedy such situations as that at Lille if official machinery will move with promptitude, and the French Government is doing all that it can to oil the wheels. Its inspectors are already estimating the amount of damages to which the various factories and workshop owners are entitled.

In addition to clearing up the land to permit the resumption of agriculture the government workmen are making temporary emergency repairs upon houses and so far eighty thousand dwellings have been made at least habitable. Seventy-five thousand barracks have been ordered, but it is very doubtful whether they can be delivered before winter and the people must have proper shelter during the many months of that wet, cold season. The Government is trying to meet the situation by building numbers of temporary huts from materials that are on the spot; old wood, felled trees, doors, etc., roofing them with sheets of corrugated iron, thousands of which were left behind by the troops, and plastering the flimsy walls with mud mixed with straw. But when one considers that two hundred and forty thousand buildings were completely and one hundred and seventy thousand partially destroyed, and two millions of people made homeless, the immensity of the task can be realized. If this great number of refugees could return to a few large centers the work of housing them would be difficult enough, but they are going back to more than three thousand towns and villages scattered far and wide across the North and East of France.

The Government realizes that shelters for the people must be provided quickly and that these shelters must give them adequate protection against the coming winter. If this is not done a grave situation must be faced, for there



will be an exodus of discouraged inhabitants who will never return again to these regions.

When in January, 1919, the Red Cross began to wind up its affairs in France, the Department of the Liberated Regions, answering a request for suggestions as to what America could do to be of further service in the devastated zone, replied that the continued giving of goods or their sale at less than market rates was no longer expedient as it discouraged the local dealers from returning and opening up their shops. So far as it was necessary to furnish emergency relief, this could be done by the French societies. The great and immediate problem concerned the children, and in this matter our coöperation would be of the highest value.

Take for example the case of Lille where there are to-day sixteen thousand children between six and thirteen years of age. During the four years of German occupation the development of these little ones was practically arrested. Mentally and physically they are four years behind what they would have been if they had lived under normal conditions, and from seventy to seventy-five per cent are tubercular. No better proof of the sort of treatment the Germans gave their helpless and innocent captives could be asked than this. They are not only in a wretched state themselves, but are an actual menace to the community. In other towns there are other children who show quite as pitifully the withering influence of German war rule. To get these children away for a long visit to the seashore or the mountains under happy conditions would mean many lives saved and many feeble little bodies made sound. It is a big task, for their numbers run up into the thousands and their parents — in many cases the fathers are dead — have no money to spare. Some indeed have lost their all.

France does not expect us to help her with this problem, but when the Red Cross asked its question she pointed to her children. France needs aid also in starting hospitals



and dispensaries in the chief cities of the Departments and arrondissements, with traveling dispensaries that would reach the smaller towns and villages. She would like to see them established and run after the American fashion, whose value was demonstrated to her by the Red Cross, with a few American doctors and nurses in charge who would train French personnel in that social "follow-up" work so well known in our country, but which France does not have. Lastly, she desires to copy our social welfare work and create in her leading towns institutions resembling our community centers where the people can meet to sing, write or play games, or witness moving-picture shows. In starting this, as well as the other forms of social work, she believes that American initiative and experience would be essential.

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